PANDORA'S BOX

J. A. MITCHELL

Jan. 31, 1913.

7

Dear Ambrazine,

This is to wish you many happy returns of the day.

Love from,
Lillian

PANDORA'S BOX

"THESE VARIOUS TOWERS, GREY WITH AGE—"

PANDORA'S BOX

By
JOHN AMES MITCHELL

AUTHOR OF
AMOS JUDD, THE PINES OF LORY,
VILLA CLAUDIA, ETC.

WITH FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS
BY THE AUTHOR

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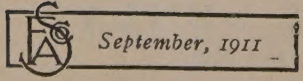

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I

A BOATMAN'S FEE

AT the foot of Drumworth Castle flows a river. It flows at leisure, in no haste to meet the ocean.

In a clumsy boat upon this river a young man was gazing upward, in a rapturous study of the castle towers.

These various towers, grey with age or green with ivy, but glistening now in the light of spring, rose high above the river's bank, all reflected upon the waters beneath, as in a mirror.

A restful harmony, this vast abode—a harmony in stone, of ancient battlements, of Elizabethan gables and great mullioned windows; of terraces and gardens—a palace with the strength of a citadel. And the young man's eyes lingered here and there upon an oriel window of feathery grace, upon the outlines of a warlike turret high against the sky, or wandered leisurely along the balustrade of the great terrace with its shrubs of fantastic pattern.

Yes, it might well be a castle in fairy land.

And the more he looked, more beauties he discovered. For this was a structure of many epochs; a record of many reigns and wars: also of several styles of architecture harmoniously reconciled by the hand of time. It was, moreover, a famous monument here in the south of England, with a stirring history. The young man knew its history. Moreover, as an architect, he was making a thorough study of the castle itself—from early fortress to modern mansion. On the seat beside him lay a sketch book, between its covers many sketches of this imposing pile.

The boat, a flat-bottomed thing, too wide and far too heavy for a single pair of oars, would have smiled at thoughts of speed. Its usual function was that of a ferry, to and fro across the river. But the ferryman was now at his noonday dinner, and the present occupant, for the idle hour, had borrowed his craft. To mistake him for the usual navigator would be a pardonable error. The brim of a soft, felt hat of a common type was lowered to shade his eyes, and his shirt of faded blue flannel, rolled up to the elbow showed arms as brown and muscular as those of the genuine pilot.

From his day dreams this present occupant was awakened, gently, by voices behind him on the river's bank. Turning, he saw an open carriage coming from the village, a driver and footman on the box. In the carriage were two ladies, one an elderly

woman with white hair, recognized by the dreamer as the Duchess of Linsmere. She had been pointed out to him on the previous day, as she was driving to church. And close beside the carriage, on a chestnut hunter, rode the Duchess's son, Lord Hepsford. The other woman, whom the dreamer had never seen before, was younger.

As the equipage stopped, the footman jumped to the ground, opened the door, and the younger woman descended. At the same moment Lord Hepsford dismounted, handing the reins of the bridle to the footman. In the still air, with no sounds from the neighboring fields to disturb the silence, their conversation came distinctly to the dreamer in the boat. After a few words with the Duchess—a handsome personage with benevolent aspect—the younger woman, with Lord Hepsford beside her, came through the little gateway, down the grassy path toward the river. Her white dress and crimson parasol enlivened the immediate landscape—already radiant in the spring sunshine. Bending slightly forward, his face toward hers, the young man was speaking with some earnestness.

"Do come tomorrow. Please do. I will call for you at any hour you say."

"No. Not tomorrow."

"Thursday, then?"

"I shall be too busy Thursday."

"Friday?"

"No. Friday I must work."

"Work! Oh, I say! What are you going to work at?"

"At finding an excuse for not going Saturday."

"Oh, come now! You *must* call it Saturday. Really. Why be so disobliging? Let's call it Saturday."

"No, not Saturday. I've a lot of engagements for Saturday."

"I don't believe it!" And in the gentleman's voice came a note of irritation.

The lady laughed. "Well, I hope you are happier for not believing it. I want you to be happy, you know."

"That's a whopper!"

To this no reply was given.

"Come Saturday," he persisted. "Why be so horribly exasperating? I am getting it up wholly on your account. The thing will fail without you. No fun at all unless *you* are there."

With the hand that was not holding the parasol she made a gesture, quietly and with an easy grace, but with authority—for the boatman to approach. Then the dreamer remembered what for a moment he had forgotten—that he had borrowed the ferryman's craft. Quickly he picked up the oars and obeyed the summons. As the boat touched the shore the gentleman was still protesting. "Then I will put it off till Monday. But it's nearly a week away."

"Don't do it on my account. I am going away Monday."

"Going away! Where?"

Without replying she stepped lightly into the boat and seated herself in the stern.

"You are not really going away?" And in the gentleman's tone there was both incredulity and protestation.

She nodded.

"For how long?"

"A week—or less."

"Really?"

Again she nodded and with a slight gesture directed the boatman to start. As the boatman pulled away Lord Hepsford again demanded:

"Where? Where are you going?"

With a slight gesture she pointed across the river, toward the castle and looked up at him with a smile.

> "Where the Hepsfords cease from troubling,
> And the Drumworths are at rest."

After a melancholy attempt at a smile Lord Hepsford shrugged his shoulders, raised his hat, then turned away to rejoin his mother.

Out into the stream, toward the castle, the boatman pulled. With furtive glances he drank in this welcome passenger—this dainty, radiant, unexpected thing. By her placid consciousness of superiority, by her superlatively patrician air, he was subdued, discomfited and bewitched. Indeed, this creature

from an upper world, in her white ethereal raiment, seemed suddenly to transform the shabby old scow into a fairy barge. As to her identity he had little doubt. She was the Daughter of the Castle—the fairy princess. A stranger in this southwest of England, having come from London only three days before, he had never seen the Lady Octavia Henrietta Louise, only child of the Earl of Drumworth, but he knew she was that exalted person. He found pleasant study in the graceful head and slender, girlish neck, the hands carelessly crossed upon the folded sunshade in her lap, the eyes half closed in thought —and her thoughts, apparently were up the river, far away. While an object of absorbing interest she was exasperatingly unconscious of the existence of the present boatman. But the present boatman soon learned that surreptitious glances were a waste of caution. After one careless look in his direction, when entering the boat, she became, so far as he could judge, unaware of his presence. Had he been a fly upon the seat she could not have given him less attention. He excited no curiosity. Now and then the far away eyes—gray they seemed to be, with dark lashes—would look up, but never at him. This neglect, while humiliating, did not lessen his interest. On a closer study he detected —or thought he did—a look of weariness in the face—signs of lassitude, or habitual *ennui*.

As he pulled at his oars—not with too much haste, for he had no desire to abbreviate this voy-

age—his imagination kindled. If only, oh! if only this soulless craft could, like the enchanted rug in the Arabian Nights, float heavenward and remain forever suspended in the white clouds above! Or, why should not this river, now unreasonably narrow, widen as they sailed until all the world was water—except a nice little island, say a year or two ahead? But since no hope was promised by changes in geography, why not endow the passenger with a change of spirit—with a livelier interest for the person in her vicinity? How gratifying if this exalted, lovely creature should lean toward him with transfigured face, and murmur, "I love you, Boatman!"

But, alas! how far the dream from reality!

So complete was her indifference to the ferryman that it seemed, at first, intentional,—and elaborately perfected. Even this consolation, however, was denied him; for it soon became clear that her thoughts were far away, and far above him. He was, apparently, too commonplace or unimportant to merit even that effort. Perhaps she was simply bored by the voyage across the river. And he wondered as to the cause of the very serious expression that had come into her face. Were these solemn thoughts for the man she had left behind? Of *his* devotion there seemed—to the boatman at least—no doubt whatever. Perhaps she liked him fairly well—but not enough. These speculations were unavoidable, but speculations of this kind, the

boatman knew, might be erroneous. Sometimes, however, idle guesses by strangers are surprisingly accurate.

Absorbed in the contemplation of her many points of interest,—her eyes, her hair, her youthful figure and patrician manner, and the gentle melancholy he would have loved to dispel—he failed to make allowance for the river's current. She reminded him of his error by a slight movement of a hand, gracious but commanding. Even this gesture toward the proper landing was made without seeing him, the far away eyes merely resting, for a moment, in the direction the boat should go. In his humble rôle of motive power—of animal force—he hastened to rectify the error and headed the boat as the hand directed.

But this man's pride was destined to be further outraged.

When he had brought his boat alongside the landing the Daughter of the Castle stood up and held forth a hand as if—it seemed to the ferryman—she wished assistance in stepping ashore. Happy indeed to render this service he sprang to his feet and stepped forward with outstretched arm. He realized with a thrill of pleasure that he was to receive her hand in his—to come in contact with her, to hear a word of thanks, perhaps, for performing a trivial deed—to bring him at last within the sacred circle of her vision.

But, in another instant, briefer than sudden death

—and sharper—he and his ambition were flung to a fathomless obscurity. Into his extended palm a coin was dropped. Not with a glance of recognition but with calm eyes far away—eyes that barely regarded the piece of money as it fell. Moreover, her own fingers in parting with the metal retreated in a dainty upward motion, calmly but sufficiently rapid to avoid contact with his own.

As he lowered his eyes to the shining thing—which seemed to return the glance like a mocking, triumphant, silver eye—the color flew to his face. His lips moved. As he turned swiftly up with a look, which, had the lady seen it, might have held her attention for an instant, she was stepping lightly to the shore, already forgetting him!

For a moment the young man, with no change of position, held forth his hand with its shilling. Then his cheeks grew hotter still as he remembered the regular price was sixpence and she had given him an extra sixpence for himself!

In the profundity of his humiliation he closed his eyes. By this acceptance of a few pennies he was made to realize the abysmal social gulf—in the giver's mind—between her and himself. For a brief period he looked upon the metal disk as he might have studied a venomous reptile, or any other thing whose close acquaintance was unthinkable. Then, his look of hostility gave place to the faintest of smiles, and he put the shilling in his pocket. Not in a pocket with other change, but in a pocket by

itself, that it might not be lost among ordinary coins.

Pulling the brim of his hat still further over his eyes he again sat down, took up the oars and rowed out upon the river.

II

HIS LADYSHIP

THIS adventure of the shilling disturbed the boatman. For several hours it supplied him with a variety of emotions; swift changes from a spurious joy to a hot and helpless exasperation. His efforts to despise the lady for her lack of perception were constant failures. He was aware that her personal appearance added to her offense. Had she been old and ugly he could have overlooked her amazing insensibility to his own presence. But her youth, her beauty, her personal charm, her voice, her exalted manner, he could neither forgive nor forget.

This victim of the unintentional snub was a tall young man of angular figure. While never accused of beauty he bore a face in which intelligence, honesty, and a sense of humor were clearly written. This afternoon he smiled at intervals. It was merely done, however, to show himself that, after all, he was only amused by the adventure. His customary smile bore the same relation to these mechanical efforts as honey to crab apples. Humiliation and resentment were his present companions. And he

found little consolation in the thought that he might never see the Lady Octavia again, and if he did see her she would not see him. So, while outwardly active with his camera and his sketches, inwardly he chewed the cud of defeat, of helplessness, and—worst of all—oblivion.

Earlier than usual he walked back to the village of Drumworth, about a mile from the castle. He remembered, in the midst of his mortifications, that Mrs. Pindar, at whose cottage he was lodging, had once been a maid to this Lady Octavia's mother; and although poor Mrs. Pindar's mind was now a blank, Sally Pindar, the daughter, might be tempted to talk about the exasperating passenger who had ruined his afternoon. Mrs. Pindar, as he approached, stood leaning upon the wooden gate of the little garden in front of her cottage. On the doorstep her ten-year-old son was mending a cricket bat. Mrs. Pindar, pleasantly stout, had a wide, cheerful face that gave no indication whatever of the mental confusion behind it. Unlike many persons thus afflicted she was never depressed. She suffered, apparently, small loss of memory. But her mind, like a humming bird in a sunny garden, was everywhere at once.

When this lodger now commented on the weather, Mrs. Pindar replied, with her friendly smile, that she never wore such things in summer. And when he asked if her daughter was in the house she laid a hand upon his arm and advised him, in a motherly

way, to avoid dangerous encounters, saying they were not only bad for the nerves but had prevented many another lady of quality from coming to life again.

Then she opened the little gate for him, and after looking intently into his eyes an instant, backed away, curtsied and said, "Your ladyship is always welcome."

He raised his hat. "Thank you, Mrs. Pindar."

Again Mrs. Pindar curtsied. "Your ladyship knows best. But I have been so sorry all these years; so very sorry! Yes, indeed! But then, it is not for me to blame your ladyship."

The lodger bowed, and with a sober face. These inconsequent speeches moved him to pity, never to mirth. He saw Sally Pindar in the living room near the open door at the back of the cottage. She was sewing. In the doorway itself, looking out into the garden beyond, sat a large, buff cat, Toby by name. From the western sun a flood of light illuminated that portion of a room otherwise in shadow, for the low casement windows with their little diamond shaped panes of antique glass merely enlivened the general obscurity. In the center of this bar of light sat Sally Pindar, absorbed in her work. The flood of light also illuminated Toby, touching him up with an edge of gold.

Sally Pindar herself was favored neither by art nor nature. She seemed one of those creatures whom Providence had chosen to forget. Thin, short,

angular, round shouldered, pale, with colorless eyes and hair, she possessed a kind heart, a tender conscience and a timid soul. Her weak voice and hesitating manner invited deprecation and neglect. Certain laws of heredity had completed the work of the careless Providence by endowing her with a fragile constitution and poor health. But Sally herself had triumphed over these laws of heredity and the forgetful Providence. For, although unattractive, undesired by men, weak and a constant sufferer, she was always cheerful.

The lodger drew up a chair and seated himself before the maiden.

"What are you doing? Sewing the buttons on my waistcoat!"

With an embarrassed smile she looked up, then down again. "The tailor you mentioned has gone to Taunton for a day or two and—and it is so very easy to tighten these buttons that I thought you—perhaps might not object if I did it myself."

"Object! Well, I wish there was some way in which I could show my gratitude. Can't you fall into the river and let me pull you out, or give me some sort of a chance to do something in return?"

But Sally Pindar merely smiled, shook her head and kept on with the buttons.

"That makes four debts of gratitude." Holding up a hand he began to count on his fingers. "Talking with that insufferable Mrs. Trent for an hour

yesterday just to save me from being bored to death; finding my collar stud under the washstand; not cursing me when I spilled ink on your best carpet, and now—those buttons."

Again the girl protested.

But he interrupted. "Let angels kiss the hem of your garment. I am unworthy. Have you discovered yet why your mother always calls me a ladyship?"

Sally shook her head. "No. Poor mother! It would be useless to ask her."

"Do you really think she takes me for some female of quality?"

"It is possible."

"Perhaps I am a fairy princess and she is the first to discover it."

This idea seemed to interest Toby, for he turned and approached the speaker. Toby was an exceptional cat, well nourished and dignified, whose color, a buffish brown along the back, grew fainter in descending until, at the stomach, it became a delicate écru. This écru stomach was inviting. And its owner knew it. To lie upon a piece of furniture, extend his limbs and display to its utmost dimension this witchery of golden fur was a tempting invitation to the average beholder. To pass your hand along this stomach was a sensuous joy. To its owner, as a means of gaining attention and caresses, it was a talisman. As a means of procuring food, however, it proved a mirth inspiring failure;

for a fuller, more exuberant and a more prosperous pouch one rarely encountered.

After rubbing against the lodger's shins he rolled over on his back. The lodger accepted the invitation and stroked the écru stomach. While so engaged he remembered that he desired certain information from Sally Pindar. "As to ladies of quality, do you believe, if this Lady Octavia, for instance, and I were standing side by side, a sharp observer would find difficulty in knowing which was which?"

Sally Pindar smiled, but gave no answer. The question was too silly.

"I should hate to change places with her, all the same. She is probably a fearful snob, self satisfied, indifferent to others, too cold and narrow to be of much pleasure either to herself or to anybody else."

In amazement the girl looked up. She was clearly shocked. "Why, Mr. Lovejoy! How can you say such a thing? Lady Octavia is a charming woman, kind, gentle and most unselfish. Everybody will tell you so."

"But you will admit she is everlastingly proud."

"Oh, no, sir! And even if she is you couldn't blame her. One should remember her bringing up —and the influence of Lady Georgiana."

"Poor thing!" sighed the lodger. "So it would be no fault of her own if she were obnoxious. But why waste our pity? Snobs are always happy."

Had Sally Pindar known this man better she would have taken his remarks less seriously.

"A snob!" she exclaimed. "Oh, no! She is not a snob! In fact if her mother had lived and she not been so much with Lady Georgiana she would be quite different, I think. Although the Drumworths have always had good opinions of themselves they are no worse than you or I would be in their position."

"That's a humiliating thought. But who is Lady Georgiana?"

Then, from Sally Pindar's lips, came the information he desired. The Lady Octavia, when four years old, had lost her mother, a gentle, highly cultivated and most lovable woman. Upon this mother's death a sister of the Earl of Drumworth, the Lady Georgiana, a most exclusive person, came to the castle and took the mother's place. And Octavia, being an only child, received a most exclusive education. Persistent effort bore its fruit. The child realized at an early age that a benevolent Creator, while peopling the earth, had established two classes of humans, distinct and far asunder; people of birth and others. Of these others not much was expected. But of those well born, of whom too much could never be said, the child Octavia was amply informed. And then, of course, in her thirsting, childish mind became imbedded the fixed conviction—and from reliable sources—that between these people of gentle birth and the others ex-

isted a bottomless gulf, unbridgable and everlasting.

"And although Lady Octavia," said Sally Pindar, "is now a person with her own opinions, she has had so much attention, being the only child of a great house, that her pride is quite natural."

The lodger heaved a sigh. Crossing one of his long legs over the other he sank lower in his chair. "She is probably her own worst enemy. But why is she not married, with all her beauty and shining ancestry? Are the gods beneath her?"

Sally Pindar stopped sewing, and resting her hands in her lap, looked out through the open door toward the western sky.

"I really think, and so do many others, that Lady Georgiana's ideas are so—so very—"

"Fantastic."

"No, sir, not that, but so very lofty and kind of superior that Lady Octavia may never marry at all. And it is too bad, for she is a most interesting woman; generous, unselfish—and a lovable nature."

"And more bumptious than a million peacocks."

"Oh, never! never! You don't know her at all! Her pride is not a bad kind."

"She has a domineering little nose."

Sally smiled, without looking up from her work.

"And insolent eyes."

This time she looked up. "Insolent eyes! What an idea!"

"And a hard, cruel mouth."

"Why, Mr. Lovejoy! What *do* you mean?

Why, hers is a beautiful, a lovely mouth,—refined, sensitive, exceptionally pretty."

"Well, perhaps—but you must admit that her manners are snubby."

"Indeed, I do not!"

"Well, anyway, she has a harsh voice."

"A harsh voice! Surely, you have never heard her speak! Her voice is particularly soft and gentle. It is really musical."

"Now, Miss Pindar, either your affection for the lady misleads you or those acres of family portraits at Drumworth Castle are persistent liars."

"What do you mean?"

"I went through the castle yesterday with the usual weekly visitors, and if there is one dominating trait in those generations of portraits it is pride —an unreasoning, cast iron, inextinguishable pride; the pride that fattens on itself; the splendid, thoroughly enjoyable, witless pride of ancestry and money."

Sally Pindar's eyebrows had risen in surprise. "One would think you were quite stirred up about it!"

The lodger recrossed his legs. "I am. I should like to drop in on the Drumworth family and just tell Mr. and Mrs. Earl and their granddaughter, niece, or whatever she may be, how stupid a thing pride is—and how ridiculous are its victims."

"Why don't you?"

"It would be a waste of time. That is, of *my*

time. Their time is probably of little value. Besides, the humbling of the haughty is an arduous task."

Sally Pindar was never quite sure as to how seriously this man's speeches were to be taken. Although his face in repose was more grave than gay, there appeared, at times, contradictory lines about his eyes and mouth that told of inward mirth. As she glanced at him now she found him studying her own face, from the corners of his eyes, as if amused by her loyalty. But she made no reply, as her mother, at this moment, came slowly into the room. The lodger rose from his chair. He always treated this woman with as much deference as if she were his own mother. For a moment she stood behind her daughter, then, drawn toward the young man by something she saw—or imagined she saw —in his face, approached him and went through with what had now become a habit. After gazing intently into his eyes for a moment, she backed away and curtsied. He, as usual, acknowledged the curtsy by a bow. Then Mrs. Pindar said: "Yes, indeed, your ladyship is very brave to face such a temper. A strange world, isn't it? Full of wonderful things. Yes, indeed!"

Again she curtsied, moved toward the doorway, there hesitated a moment, then passed out into the garden.

Some hours later, in the small hours of the morning, this unforgetting boatman arose from his bed

and stood for a time at his chamber window. In the western sky a round, resplendent moon was partly hidden by the towers of Drumworth Castle. These shadowy towers loomed high above the earth, in grim, serene indifference to things below. Even at night they seemed engaged in their usual occupation of despising the surrounding country. And somewhere within those walls slumbered the most exasperating woman in the world.

His own pride was further harrowed by the corroding consciousness that a gulf existed in this lady's mind between herself and him—a vast, unmeasured gulf, as between beings on separate planets.

After gazing for a time on this discouraging scene he went to his coat and took from a pocket the portrait of a woman—a photograph not much larger than a visiting card. In the moonlight, at the window, he studied the face. Then, on a sudden impulse, he tore the picture across the middle, tossed the two pieces into a waste basket and went back to bed.

Half an hour later he arose from his bed, lit a candle, gathered up the two pieces of the portrait and, by pasting paper on the back, carefully joined them together.

III

LADY OCTAVIA'S DISCOVERY

MANY times during the next twenty-four hours the ferryman recalled the sixpenny "tip" and the kind lady who bestowed it. The kind lady, on the contrary, did not once recall either the gift or the recipient.

The following morning, it being customary to work an hour or so in her own little garden, training and trimming plants and gathering flowers, she put on, as usual, an old straw hat, a blue gingham apron and her working gloves. But the gingham apron, the soiled gloves and the trowel were not deceptive. They added no humility to the lady's bearing; no meekness to her spirit. As a child she had shown democratic tastes that alarmed her aunt; tastes pardonable perhaps in a person of ordinary clay but not befitting a Drumworth. While Auntie George realized that a proper pride of birth might not be expected in a child of six, she fully realized that a girl of ten should be ashamed of certain companions. And when Lady Octavia, at the age of ten, made no concealment of a friendship with the daughter of the second gardener, there was cause

for action. And then began, on the part of Auntie George, a vigilant, systematic and unceasing instruction in family pride. In the unfolding, sensitive nature of her niece she imbedded, with all the force of experience and religious conviction, a sterner realization of the abysmal gulf between blue and common blood; of the degradation, social and moral, that inevitably resulted from violations of this heaven-born truth.

The task was easy. Counteracting influences were not at hand. The vine grew as it was trained. Born and reared in a castle, every stone of which bore record of the glories of her race, surrounded by portraits of noble progenitors, receiving ever, from the outer world, the deference due to exalted position, Lady Octavia, at the age of twenty, enjoyed a consciousness of superiority that needed no support.

And this morning, while at work among her flowers, the very walls of the castle that towered above were a silent but impressive tribute to the honor of her name. The splendid terrace, the ancient oaks beneath, the broad acres that stretched away toward the village, the fields and forests, all were Drumworth—and always had been, since English history began.

Straightening up after a time, she closed her eyes and inhaled, with a deep breath, the flower scented air of her garden. This garden, at the east end of the long terrace, was separated from

it and hidden by an ancient row of yew trees, cut down to a hedge.

After standing a moment and looking idly around, her eyes rested upon a narrow door near the corner of the eastern wall. There was nothing remarkable or unusually inviting about this narrow archway at this present moment, but, obeying an impulse, possibly the idle curiosity of an idle moment, she moved in that direction. To be sure the door had always been there. But it had always been closed. Now it was ajar. Being a solid little door, very ancient, with massive iron hinges and a rusty lock, the temptation to open it had been easily resisted. Besides, she knew what lay behind it. She wondered, also in an idle way, why it was open. As many months had passed since she had visited that portion—the older and disused portion—of the castle, she strolled beneath the narrow archway and entered a court. This court was surrounded on two sides by the most ancient buildings of the castle.

Along a cloistered passage she continued, still guided by the idle impulse, through another archway beneath the old baronial hall until she came out into a garden. This garden was the original terrace of the castle and dated from William the Conqueror. Now, long neglected, it seemed an orgie of shrubs and weeds and flowers. Vines not trimmed in years covered the old stones of the castle wall, and hung in heavy festoons from windows, cornices and from vases on the balustrade.

With half closed eyes Lady Octavia stood for a moment, breathing the fragrance of this almost forgotten garden. Then, looking over the tops of the oaks, her eyes followed the shining river until it disappeared among the far away woods and hills. And she gazed reverently—as she had always done—upon the stupendous ruins, close beside her, of the round tower of Norman days, now almost hidden beneath its ivy.

Whenever she came to this garden—a favorite resort in her childhood—it had always stirred her imagination. It impressed her as a spot for romantic happenings—of legendary deeds, long since forgotten. She had likened it to the Garden of the Sleeping Beauty. A nearby statue of a dancing cupid seemed trying vainly to recall the triumphs of his earlier days. The old fountain with its stone basin almost hidden in a tangle of neglected roses gave, in its waterless silence, the final touch of melancholy.

But now, of course, all was smiling beneath the morning sun. Strolling along a weed grown path, between rows of untrimmed box, Lady Octavia heard a sound in her vicinity that was not in harmony with the forgotten stories of the little garden, nor with her own thoughts. She stopped—and frowned. A man was whistling. Very near it sounded, yet no man was visible. The whistling seemed to come from the wall itself. Looking up at a great mullioned window just above her she no-

ticed that one of the swinging casements was open. And as she stood there the whistling ceased, suddenly, in the middle of a note. It was followed, a moment later, by a very low singing, or rather humming, as of a man absorbed in his work and who paid little attention to the kind of sound he produced. This, also, was of brief duration; then followed another silence.

She felt a gentle curiosity to know the kind of mental or mechanical effort these fitful utterances were assisting.

So, Lady Octavia, in her gingham apron, her old straw hat and soiled gloves, with her trowel in one hand, a little flower basket in the other, entered a passage, ascended a few stone steps to her left and stood at the doorway of the old Baronial Hall.

As she paused for a moment in this doorway, she saw a man standing on a chair, before a table, his back toward her. Lady Octavia had a sense of humor, and a smile came to her lips. For on this workman's blouse—a grey linen blouse such as French mechanics wear—were two enormous letters, E. L. painted in black paint, and so large as to cover the entire back of the garment. She smiled because the liberal dimensions and conspicuousness of the two initials seemed to indicate a needless anxiety on the part of the wearer lest this treasure might be claimed by others.

The room at whose doorway she now stood, the primitive Baronial Hall of the Castle, was built in

the twelfth century by Richard of Drumworth. It was long and wide and high, with an open timbered roof, high mullioned windows with deep recesses, and no furniture save a massive oaken table and a few ancient, high-backed chairs. Along the sides ran a high wainscot of oak, now black with age. Against its walls, discolored by time, hung arms and armor with portraits of many Drumworths, long since departed. The heavy table at which this stranger worked had been drawn, for better light, near the alcove of the great window.

While she was pausing for a moment in the doorway the man jumped down from the chair—or stool—and went on with his work. Large sheets of white paper were before him. He seemed to be drawing something.

The Daughter of the Castle entered. She had approached within a very few feet of the draughtsman before he became aware of her presence. Then he turned his head. His visitor, with a careless glance at his face, approached the table and stood beside him, looking down at his drawing.

After rising and acknowledging her presence by a slight bow, which she returned with a condescending movement of her own head, the workman resumed his seat.

"Why," she exclaimed in mild surprise, "that is the outside of this castle!"

"Yes."

"It is the old ruined tower, rebuilt!"

"Yes."

"Very interesting. Is that the way it looked, originally?"

"Well, possibly, as near as one can tell."

"But how do you know it had a top like that, with those battlements?"

He reached over, took up an old woodcut and laid it on the table before her. It was a view of Drumworth Castle, made many years ago, evidently torn from a book. In the foreground was an attacking army, with tents, scaling-ladders, catapults, battering-rams and all the medieval implements of assault. It showed the fortress as it was, or might have been, five centuries ago.

Lady Octavia took up the picture and studied it. "I never saw this before. How very interesting! Is it from some old book?"

"Probably. It was picked up in a print shop."

As she studied the picture in silence he went on with his work. The action seemed to imply a certain indifference to—or failure to realize—the quality of his visitor. This apparent indifference to her presence was something new for Lady Octavia, and, silently, she resented it. At the same moment, however, she remembered her present attire, the old hat, the soiled garden gloves and the gingham apron. A faint smile, unobserved by the workman, came to her lips; and with it came an entertaining idea. Why not continue the deception? Perhaps he took her for the gardener's daughter. Being an

ignorant man—a common person—he would naturally be deceived by superficial things.

"How long have you been here?"

"Three days."

"Do you come from London?"

"Yes, I came here from London."

"You are an architect, I suppose."

"Well, I try to think so."

"For whom are you doing this?" she asked.

"For an architectural firm."

"It is they who hire you?"

"Yes."

"Not the Earl of Drumworth nor his son?"

"No."

"But they know you are here, of course?"

"O yes! It is with their permission."

After standing beside this man a moment she became deeply interested in his work. Her affection for the castle was so deep and so sincere that whatever related to it was of supreme importance. As a child she had played in every court and garden, among all its stairs and corridors, through all its halls and towers. Now, to see its dismantled walls come forth, on paper, and rise again in their departed majesty—their forgotten beauty—brought a thrill of pleasure and of pride. The crumbling ivy-covered ruins on the eastern corner had risen in this man's hands—on paper—to a stately height. On the crowning parapet of this tower he was now at work.

"Is that the way the old tower looked originally?"

He stood a little to one side, that she might see it better.

"Why, yes; as near as I can restore it."

"But how do you know? That tower does not show in this picture."

"No. But one goes by a general knowledge of how such a tower of that period, of these dimensions and in such a position, was likely to appear."

"Then it is not absolutely correct, after all."

"Possibly not, in the sense of being an absolutely faithful reproduction of the original. But it is safe to believe, from the towers already standing, that it resembled one of these."

He took up four other drawings on tracing paper, of the same tower, and laid them before her.

"Yes, that is true," she murmured, "they all seem probable."

"Which do you like the best?" he asked.

"I like them all."

"But which do you prefer?"

"I am no judge. I know too little of architecture."

However, she laid a finger—in the soiled garden glove—upon one of the tracings.

"I think I prefer that one."

"So do I!"

And in his voice, as he spoke, there was a slight note of enthusiasm, almost boyish; and a suggestion of a friendly appreciation of her good judgment—as if glad to receive her approval of his own decision.

"It is simpler and more imposing," he exclaimed. "There is more dignity in the plain walls and heavy cornice."

She smiled, and nodded assent. She began to like this man.

"I will show you," he said, "how it looks with the rest of the castle."

And laying a piece of tracing paper over this drawing he proceeded to sketch the tower of their choice. He drew it rapidly and with what seemed to her a marvelous facility and precision; and all with picturesque effect.

She looked on in surprise—and admiration—as this new tower took shape beneath his pencil. She herself could sketch in an amateurish way; but it bore no resemblance to this man's work. His artistic sense and architectural knowledge inspired her with a sincere respect.

After looking on in silent admiration she murmured at last, involuntarily:

"How well you do it!"

He made a little bow of acknowledgment, slightly exaggerated and half in jest.

"Thank you."

Again Lady Octavia resented, in silence, this familiar manner, and again she remembered that she was being treated as the gardener's daughter. But she began to find pleasure in the situation. It was a new experience. She resolved to regard it as an amusing adventure.

"You must enjoy your work."

"Indeed I do! Life is worth living when one's labor is more absorbing than one's amusements."

As he spoke, he raised his head, and their eyes met. This was her first real knowledge of his face; for, being a workman in a blouse, he had received but a thoughtless glance. The eyes into which she now found herself looking brought a mild surprise—not so much from anything startling in their appearance as from elusive memories they aroused. These memories, shadowy and indefinable, seemed related to a far away period—to her childhood days. For an instant she struggled to reunite the broken threads, but in vain. They were strangely familiar, these eyes. They were a light gray—or blue, perhaps—with lashes almost black, and a peculiar upward turn to the eyebrows. Their expression, too, serene and very friendly, caused a mild bewilderment. She seemed looking into the face of an old friend, some intimate companion of her childhood whom she had known—and liked.

Failing in her involuntary effort to connect these eyes with that other pair of eyes of which these were the counterpart, she lowered her glance to the drawings of the castle. And a slightly warmer color came into her cheeks as she realized the very earnest manner in which she had stared at him.

Merely to break the silence, and to relieve her own embarrassment she said:

"I see you have a man in armor over the gateway in one drawing but not in this last one."

"Yes. I copied it from that old chap up there." And he pointed across the room to a suit of fourteenth-century armor, standing beside the old chimney. Lady Octavia frowned. To hear a sainted ancestor, a hero of historic battles, the renowned Richard of Drumworth called "that old chap," sent a thrill of resentment through every nerve of her patrician being. But calmly she replied:

"He is believed by those familiar with English history to have brought more glory to the house of Drumworth than any other soldier."

"But such easy glory, and so cheap!"

Lady Octavia almost gasped.

"Cheap!"

The workman, without looking up from his drawings repeated quietly:

"Cheap and easy. Yes. I rubbed him out. It was doing him too much honor."

"Indeed! It might be interesting to know why."

"Well, that suit of armor is a wonderful piece of work. I have been examining it. From crown to toe there is not a weak place in it. Not an open joint—no crack for foe to enter."

"I fail to see how the merit of a soldier's armor detracts from the merit of the man himself."

"But don't you see that in such a get up he was as safe in the thick of battle as at home in his own

bed? Wasn't it Gustavus Adolphus who was captured in a fight and his enemies had him on the ground for half an hour trying to find a place in his armor to stab him?"

"I know nothing about it."

"Well, whoever it was—they worked in vain until he was rescued by his friends. War in those days, for a well equipped gentleman, was like sitting at a window and shooting peasants as they hammer the walls of your house."

The lady tried hard to suppress her indignation. "Those he fought against wore armor just as good."

"Yes, a few of them. The great mass, however, the rank and file he had the fun with, were clad in homespun—or leather, with possibly a casque or a breast-plate. It was they who took chances, and who, incidentally, got very little credit. Perhaps there was very little credit to go round and the ironclads needed all."

Lady Octavia's chin had risen a little higher. There was anger in her eyes. But the draughtsman was unobservant.

"That armor," she replied, "was worn by Richard of Drumworth at the battle of Agincourt. He was a distinguished soldier of his time, and considered the right hand in battle of Henry the Fifth. It is somewhat novel to hear him called a coward, and by a—by a—"

The draughtsman caught her eye and laughed. "—By a thing like me? Oh, well, I didn't really call

him a coward. A man is not a coward because he goes a hunting. And this Richard chap was not necessarily a coward because he slashed around in safety among the unarmored soldiers. It was his idea of sport. We must blame the times more than the individual."

Lady Octavia made no reply. Her face, however, was expressing as much severity as she could summon.

But the draughtsman went on. "Perhaps you remember, or don't remember, or never read, Mr. William Shakespeare's play of Henry the Fifth."

"I have read it."

"In describing the night before that battle of Agincourt he says:

> And from the tents,
> The armourers, accomplishing the knights,
> With busy hammers closing rivets up,
> Give dreadful note of preparation.

Really now, there is a humorous side to it, isn't there? Why, just imagine yourself a common soldier and encountering one of these knights in a battle. Every time he struck you he would draw blood. And you—well, you might as well be hammering a kitchen boiler."

Lady Octavia's breath came a little quicker, and another flush was in her cheeks.

"Of course, there was always the chance," he went on, "of a horse falling under all that weight of junk. The only real danger, however, was for

the horse, who must have found mighty little fun in rolling over on a cluster of iron cylinders with spurs at one end and a sort of teakettle at the other."

As for the daughter of the castle, she had received a shock. This new light so suddenly turned upon a glorified ancestor had kindled a sudden, almost solemn, indignation. There was a brief silence, in which her eyes moved haughtily from the head of the workman to the suit of armor, out of which the spirit of the invincible Richard of Drumworth, right hand in battle of Henry V, seemed regarding her with silent but portentous anger. Was he rebuking her as a traitor to her own blood?

"Perhaps you would not have said these things to the man himself."

"Not when he had his armor on. It would be like quarreling with a lamp-post."

Looking up into the maiden's face the draughtsman was confronted by two outraged eyes.

He returned this look with the calmest of smiles—amiable and frank. "Please do not think I wish to disparage this famous killer. I am only saying that he is not my own idea of a hero. If I were a Drumworth I should never give his effigy that place of honor."

But the feelings of Lady Octavia had been grievously wounded. She resented this profanation of the memory of a splendid soldier. Family idols, heroes of childhood, may not be slurred with im-

punity. If great founders of historic houses are to be maligned and belittled by common people—such as this man—then, what next?

With a smile, such as one old friend might bestow upon another, he inquired:

"Is he a hero of yours?"

"Who?"

"Our metallic friend."

Lady Octavia made another effort to conceal her anger. Calmly she answered:

"Yes—in a way."

"Then allow me to apologize for my comments. I am afraid I have offended you."

"It doesn't matter."

"Oh, indeed it does! I am very sorry. Please forgive me."

"Certainly. There is nothing to forgive."

But, too proud to argue, she turned in silence and walked slowly away. And she moved with the grace and the easy disdain that became the descendant of a hundred earls.

IV

AN IDOL TOTTERS

SLOWLY, under the cloistered arches, through her own garden and then along the great terrace, walked Lady Octavia, with puzzled brow and absent look. At intervals she closed her eyes as a help to concentration. She was striving vainly to recall the forgotten person to whom this architect bore so strange a resemblance. It seemed, at moments, as if the face of some old time friend was returning at her summons. By closing her eyes she could almost see it. Within her vision, however, it refused to come.

While interested in this draughtsman's work she was, at the same time, indignant—and shocked. Shocked that a workman in a blouse should doubt the quality of the greatest warrior of her house; angry with herself for being influenced by his words. Yet, after all, it was incontestable that the great Richard of Drumworth, with other ironclad heroes, was safer in his armor than out of it. Or why should they have worn it? And surely, as this impertinent draughtsman had asserted, the common men on foot, in homespun and in leather, had shown,

at least, an equal courage. Moreover, her irritation was not diminished by the consciousness that the great Richard, as an embodiment of reckless heroism, had dropped a peg or two in her esteem. She realized, with sorrow, that the fine edge of her idolatry was dulled. And to her dismay she found that the more she pondered the more she doubted. And doubts concerning this sainted ancestor were so distressing that at lunch this day, feeling the need of support for her wavering adoration, she remarked carelessly:

"Wouldn't it be dreadful if our great Richard was something of a humbug, like so many others?"

At the table was her great-aunt, the Lady Georgiana, and her father, Lord Aylesden. Her grandfather, the Earl of Drumworth, was absent.

Auntie George followed her niece's glance toward the full length portrait of the man in armor that hung against the wall, then raised her eyebrows.

"Something of a what?"

"Of a humbug."

Auntie George straightened up. Always erect, with a spine that never bent—she now stiffened yet a little more. Her face also stiffened. Although Lady Georgiana's features were faultless, she had never been a beauty. Perhaps a superabundant, unquenchable confidence in herself, together with her pride of birth, and certain dominant qualities, had hardened her expression. But, whatever the rea-

son, no man had pursued her. She had frightened the timid; and those braver men who might have won her had reconsidered and had wedded elsewhere.

"What do you mean, Octavia?"

"Why, I mean by going into battle so well protected in his iron clothes that nobody could hurt him. And then killing common soldiers who had no protection in the way of armor."

Auntie George, for an instant, seemed dazed by the novelty—or the sacrilege—of the suggestion. She stopped eating and regarded her niece in silence. With eyebrows still elevated she blinked as one who slowly recovers consciousness after a shock. Lord Aylesden leaned back in his chair and regarded his daughter with a look of surprise. This look was followed by a frown, then, slowly, by a smile. Lord Aylesden's face had never been addicted to rapid changes of expression.

"Well, by Jove, Octavia! There's an idea in that!"

"An idea indeed!" exclaimed Auntie George. "A most extraordinary idea!"

Lord Aylesden turned and also regarded the ancestral portrait. "I never thought of that before."

"I should hope not," said Auntie George. "And I am sorry, Octavia, that a Drumworth should try to belittle the glory and tarnish the memory of a great ancestor—the heroic founder of a splendid house."

"But I don't Auntie George. I felt just that way myself."

"Felt that way! When? Why not always?"

Octavia showed a slight embarrassment. "I do feel that way now."

"Then why say such things?"

"Oh, it just came into my head, I suppose."

"Well, don't harbor such thoughts. It is the kind of sentiment one might expect from a labor agitator, an anarchist, or some destructive, envious, common person."

On the face of Octavia's father, however, the smile still remained. "But you must admit, Auntie George, that the idea is—er—original."

"Original! Yes. And ridiculous."

"Well, now, really it seems to me, you know, there is some truth in it."

"Not a particle of truth or sense in it! Many of those against whom he fought were also in armor."

"And were also quite safe."

"Not at all. At Agincourt, for instance, where Richard of Drumworth covered himself with glory, many gentlemen in armor on both sides were killed."

"You mean," and Octavia kept a serious face, "that each gentleman had armor on both sides?"

"I do not. I mean a great many noblemen in armor, both French and English, were slain."

"No, Auntie George, excuse me. Very few gentlemen in armor were killed. I have just been look-

ing it up. I mean, of course, compared with the common soldiers."

A short silence followed, broken by Lady Georgiana, who regarded her niece with half closed eyes. "Why should you look it up, Octavia?"

"To see if there was any truth in it."

"And was this a belief of your own that you wished to verify?"

"Why, no. I did not wish to believe it."

"Then who put such an idea into your head?"

For an instant Octavia hesitated. As her eyes, however, in her uncertainty turned again toward the painting, Richard of Drumworth himself came to the rescue. "It might occur to anybody, don't you think, just from looking at the portrait? The man inside was so very, very safe."

"Most certainly I do not."

"But he wore his armor for protection, didn't he?"

"Of course."

"And he was well protected or he would not have bothered with such a clumsy thing."

"Certainly. And he was wise to do it."

"Oh, yes! No one doubts his wisdom, Auntie George."

"Octavia, I am really ashamed of you."

Again Lord Aylesden smiled, then frowned and shook his head. "So am I, Octavia. You must not upset our enjoyable beliefs by such wicked thoughts."

"But I have another thought that is wickeder still."

Lady Georgiana elevated her chin and studied her niece with renewed suspicion. "What have you been reading, Octavia? Or with whom have you been talking?"

"Why, Auntie George, cannot one have ideas without getting them from books or other people?"

"Not such ideas as you seem to be indulging in at present. At least I should hope not."

"Well, give us the wickeder thought," said her father. "You probably will not be happy until it is out."

"Well, everybody that looks at that portrait is impressed by his having fought at Agincourt. And we—all the family—are proud of it."

"Naturally," from Auntie George.

"But none of our peasantry have portraits of their ancestors, who also fought at Agincourt. And those ancestors, who fought without armor, may have shown, perhaps, more courage than ours."

Lord Aylesden lowered a glass of wine which was approaching his lips. "I say, Octavia, aren't you rather rubbing it in?"

For an instant Lady Georgiana was dumb. Quickly recovering herself, however, and with a frown of severest disapproval, she was about to reply. Instead, she turned a cautionary glance toward an approaching butler and the subject was dropped.

When Octavia, on the following morning, entered

her own little garden for an hour's work, her resentment toward the invading draughtsman and his impertinence was still active—so active, in fact, that she puttered among her flowers for several minutes in the sincere belief that she was not to encourage him by another visit. As the moments passed, however, her thoughts continually and with mortifying persistence reverted to the welcome excitement of his startling utterances and to the unsolved mystery of his curiously familiar eyes. At last she drew a long and resolute breath of the delicious June morning and again passed beneath the narrow arch.

Still at work in his ridiculous blouse, with his back and its enormous initials toward the door, he was, nevertheless, aware of her presence as soon as she entered the room. He arose, turned about and greeted her with a smiling "good morning."

She returned the greeting more formally, and approached the table. He stood aside that she might better survey his work.

"Why, you have put the man in armor over the entrance!"

"Yes. How do you like him?"

"I don't like him. Please take him out."

Raising his eyebrows he regarded her in surprise. "But I put him there because you liked him."

"I have changed my mind."

"Well, women do beat the Dutch!"

"Do what?"

"Beat the Dutch."

"What do you mean by that?"

"That is a way of saying that women—that women—"

"Are fickle?"

"No; not at all! That women are—superior even to the Dutch. That they—women—are full of surprises."

"Very likely. But I have changed my mind about men in armor. You are entirely right. They do not stand for the highest courage."

"But yesterday you were angry with me for saying so."

"Not really angry," and Lady Octavia smiled without raising her eyes from the drawing.

"That is good news. In the meantime I have repented, reformed, and given him the place of honor."

"And I, in the meantime, have grown wiser. You must take him out."

"Perhaps, after all, it is a matter for others to decide. Neither you nor I own the castle, Miss Gardener."

At this name, which seemed a liberty, yet certainly was appropriate, she involuntarily gave him a look of surprise. Then she lowered her eyes to the drawing and replied, quite soberly:

"Very true. But I think it a question the architect should decide. So please take him out."

And in the manner of one who is accustomed to being obeyed she turned away and seated herself in the great Elizabethan window.

V

MORE UNEDUCATING

THROUGH the open casement of this window there came, with the morning sunshine, the perfume of flowers from the old garden beneath—the Garden of the Sleeping Beauty.

Closing her eyes, Lady Octavia inhaled this fragrance. Upon her head and shoulders, upon the wall beside her, upon the seat and the old stone floor, fell a splendor of many tints from the little diamond shaped panes of the ancient window. The colors of this window, mostly yellow and purple, had been softened by two centuries of storm and sunshine.

Lady Octavia's girlish face, the old straw hat, the graceful head, the closed eyes, were more than enough to stir a young man's fancy. Besides, it was a poet's day in June. The morning air that floated lazily in through the open casement, a languorous, tempting zephyr, laden with unconventional messages was, in itself, an invitation to lovers' dreams.

With an elbow on the drawing of the castle, his chin in his hand, his eyes upon this glowing creature in the window, so near yet so very—so very far away, the draughtsman indulged, uncon-

sciously, in a sigh that might have stirred an iceberg. It barely reached the lady's ears; but her eyes opened. And although they opened slowly, they caught him unawares. He blushed like a schoolboy, lowered his glance, and resumed his work. In the hope of diverting attention from this embarrassment, he inquired:

"Who shall replace the dishonored man in armor?"

She turned away and again closed her eyes a moment before replying. "Why not put in a common soldier—one of those who bore the brunt of battle?"

"Oh, desecrate a feudal castle by the effigy of a plebeian! There is no record in history of a self respecting lordship putting an humble follower in such a place of honor. The Earl of Drumworth would never consent; nor Lord Aylesden; nor Lady Georgiana, nor Lady Octavia."

"I am not so sure about Lady Octavia."

"I should never dare ask her."

"She is not so unreasonable as you think, perhaps."

Solemnly the draughtsman shook his head. "Well, it is mightily to her credit if she is not, with everything against her."

"Everything against her?"

"Yes. All the traditions of her family. To say nothing of her bringing up."

"Ah, indeed! Was she so badly brought up?"

"Perhaps not for so important an only child. But for a nice, enjoyable human woman, yes."

"Indeed!"

He nodded, still bending over his work. "Of course, as a stranger in these parts I can only judge from what I hear. But we all know how an only child is apt to turn out—and especially an only daughter with a lot of obsequious friends."

Octavia frowned. Furtively she studied the speaker. Was he simply impertinent—and entertaining himself at her expense? After a rapid but searching study of his serenely serious countenance she decided he was in earnest.

Placidly he continued: "In spite of all temptations she has developed, I understand, into a surprisingly fine woman—thoughtful, generous, lovable, adored by the surrounding country. Should anyone treat her with disrespect, or even harbor the intent, I believe that

Twenty thousand Cornishmen would know the reason why."

Then, straightening up and turning toward her with a smile, yet with a tone of conviction:

"She elevates the tone of the whole community. When people in the village speak of her a different expression comes into their faces. They lower their voices. The very mention of her name seems to purify the atmosphere."

Lady Octavia, hoping that her heightened color would escape his notice, acknowledged this tribute—

as to an absent person—with a slight movement of the head, and again turned her eyes toward the garden. But the draughtsman, his own eyes again upon his work, inquired carelessly:

"Do you think she is going to marry Lord what's-his-name—Slapsford—Bapsford—Hepsford?"

This unexpected question brought another flush into the lady's cheeks. "Did you hear that, too, in the village?"

"No."

"Then why do you ask?"

"Oh, just for the fun of it."

"Then it's your own idea?"

"And his too, I fancy."

She frowned, straightened up, but still looked away through the open casement. Carelessly he added: "If he never had that idea he is duller than I thought him. He should imitate the

young man of Detroit
Who knew a good thing when he saw it.

However, she is not much to look at, is she?"

Again the color flew to Octavia's cheeks. She was mortified at being the subject of this man's conversation.

Frigidly she answered: "I am no judge."

"You are familiar with her face?"

"Yes."

"Also a great admirer?"

"Never!"

"Then I can tell you what I think. The people hereabouts being humble minded and dazzled by her exalted station, have endowed a warlike spinster with the fascinations of a turtle dove. That is, unless appearances are deceptive. I met her face to face yesterday afternoon in the village. She was getting out of a Drumworth motor."

Now, as it happened, Octavia was not in the village yesterday afternoon.

"She is short but fierce of aspect," continued the draughtsman, going on with his work, "very erect, very determined, and I should hate to meet her alone on a dark night. Beauty, they say, is only skin deep, but this Lady Octavia's beauty is so far inside that it fails to reach the eye."

Repressing a mild resentment at this unmistakable picture of her Aunt Georgiana, she remembered with an effort that this man believed himself chatting with a gardener's daughter. To avoid further talk on the subject she arose, again stood at his shoulder and appeared interested in his work. "We must replace that knight in armor. You could not do better than honor a common soldier, one of those who really risked their lives."

But he shook his head. "That would be an unsolicited tribute to obscurity—a wilful encouragement to modest merit. All the lords of Drumworth would rise from their graves and curse us both."

"You seem to have very little respect for the justice of the lords of Drumworth."

"They are no worse than the other greedy lords. But, really, you know, after all, it is not to a man's discredit that he has a title."

"Indeed!"

"Certainly not. The title comes from no act of his own. It is mighty awkward to have it decreed, before your birth, that you shall be a superior person."

He turned about, and the gray eyes smiled familiarly into her own. "You agree with me, I know."

Her own eyes, with a frown, were lowered to the drawing. "I do not agree with you."

"Don't you see that I am apologizing for the nobility? Would you blame a caterpillar, for instance, for not being a bishop?"

"I should not blame the poor thing."

"Then why praise the bishop for not being a caterpillar?"

"I happen to have more respect for bishops than for caterpillars."

"Do you prefer a bad bishop to a good caterpillar?"

"For a companion, yes."

With a despairing sigh he turned and went on with his drawing. "Verily, in the words of the poet:

> Bitterness his reward
> Who seeketh sense in maidens."

"Who said that?"

"One of the minor poets."

"Who?"

"How do you like it?"

"Tell me who said it. What is his name?"

"But perhaps he never said it."

"Who?"

"Longfellow."

"Longfellow! Did Longfellow say that?"

"Not to my knowledge. I merely answered that perhaps it was he who never said it."

Again she forgot her old straw hat, her gingham apron and the soiled gloves. She forgot the gardener's daughter. Her dignity was affronted. In silence she walked away. Hastily he arose and with a few long strides overtook her and stood before the door, directly in her path. As she halted and looked coldly up into the light gray eyes, whose indefinable influence she seemed always unable to resist—or to explain—they smiled pleasantly into her own.

"Don't go away angry, again. I am really sorry if my manner was unpleasant."

"Then cultivate a better manner; and answer my question."

"Well, if you must know. His name is Lovejoy."

"Lovejoy? I do not recall that poet."

"I said he was a minor poet."

She turned about and was returning in majestic silence toward the window when she suddenly stopped and faced him.

"What is your name?"

"Ethan."

"Ethan what?"

He hesitated, and placed a hand before his mouth in the vain hope of repressing a smile.

"Ethan what?" she repeated.

"Ethan Lovejoy."

"Then that gallant witticism is an inspiration of your own?"

"I withdraw it, and I apologize. Maidens are full of sense. Too full of it. It is their only fault. You must have misunderstood me. I said, or should have said:

> Victory his reward
> Who seeketh sense in maidens."

"Too late. Your offense is not to be atoned by hasty afterthoughts." And she walked slowly to the further end of the room, as if interested in the various objects that hung upon its walls—the old portraits, the arms and armor, the banners, the antlers and other trophies of the chase.

Now this wise young man knew a thing regarding his visitor that she herself did not suspect. He knew that if he treated her as a titled guest, deferentially, with the obsequious attention she would naturally receive under present conditions, she might never come again. He knew that if she found pleasure in these visits it would be chiefly from their novelty, and from whatever surprises might enliven the routine of a very conventional existence. For

he had not been slow in discovering that a gentle excitement was more welcome to this lady than even she herself, perhaps, was ready to admit. He had heard, with the rest of us, that kings and princes, shahs, sultans, and all creatures, in fact, whose daily food was adulation, were merriest when incognito. He reasoned therefrom that for his present visitor—she being absolute queen in her own little kingdom—a change of diet might be refreshing.

During her brief promenade along the Baronial Hall she had recovered her equanimity. Pausing before a portrait she said, merely as further proof of being the gardener's daughter, and not easily offended:

"You might put that old general in if he were not so modern. He has a warlike head, and must have been a great fighter, judging from his medals."

"They stand for nothing."

"They stand for distinguished service; for battles and victory."

"Oh, not a bit! No more than if so many tin whistles were hung across his front."

So deep was Octavia's indignation that she dared not trust herself to speak. While she was framing a suitable reply the draughtsman came and stood beside her, also in front of the red coated ancestor.

"There is a prevailing idea," she said calmly, "that the Victoria Cross is a reward for bravery, or distinguished service."

"True. But that is only one of nine. The others are the order of the Garter, the Bath, St. Michael, and St. George, and similar donations. And not one of them was ever given to a private soldier or to a person of humble birth."

She made no reply.

"That is true, is it not?"

"Possibly."

"If, for instance, people born on Thursdays should institute an order and distribute medals exclusively among themselves, their medals as rewards of merit would have the same significance as this old general's ornaments. They are purely a reward for good luck in being born of influential parents. Nobody is fooled. One must confess, however, that any man with a sense of humor who can wear those things and keep a sober face, deserves a reward."

She moved away a few steps, and stood facing him. "What is your mission in life, Mr. Lovejoy? Crushing reverence? Destroying innocent beliefs? Tarnishing reputations? Making people of gentle birth ridiculous? Jeering at opinions of your—of your—"

"Betters."

"Well, yes,—betters."

As she spoke he looked calmly into her face, a little surprised perhaps—and amused—at her earnestness.

"Why, no, that is not my mission. My real mis-

sion in life, as a caterpillar, is rescuing lovely woman from the clutches of Delusion. Just at present, however, it seems to consist in offending her and apologizing."

With his head to one side he extended his hands, sideways, as if inviting pardon. Being tall and rather lank of figure he was almost comic in his shapeless, wide spreading, ink-spattered, linen blouse. While he spoke, a bee, loud buzzing and of huge proportions—for a bee—came floating in through the open casement, and encircled the speakers. Attracted perhaps by the vivid red of the old general's coat, and by the ray of sunlight that fell upon it from an upper window, he approached as if to investigate. Then he reeled away toward the window, his buzzing, in the silent hall, reverberating from end to end.

"Even he," said the draughtsman, "has a sense of humor, and he is laughing still."

This appeared, in truth, so natural an explanation of the bee's behavior that Octavia could not help smiling. But with an air of disapproval she returned to the drawing table. The young man followed and went on with his work.

Again standing beside him she became, as usual, seriously interested in the drawing. He certainly was clever. She envied his facility of hand, his knowledge of architectural detail, and his enthusiasm. She found a certain excitement in the ease

and rapidity with which, on sheets of tracing paper, he made tentative sketches of doors, windows, cornices, chimneys, turrets and corner towers. And she noticed, incidentally, that his hands, while long and muscular, were surprisingly light of touch. Again she murmured:

"How well you do it!"

"Thanks."

Then came a silence, interrupted by the draughtsman, who began, of a sudden, to whistle, then to sing—in a low voice to be sure, and out of tune, but in a lively and enthusiastic manner—a triumphant rendering of the march in "Aïda," accompanied by the tapping of a triangle upon the drawing board. Still humming, and apparently forgetful of his visitor, he climbed upon his high seat and stood looking down upon his work. Stopping in the middle of a note, as suddenly as he had begun, he exclaimed:

"There! I've got it this time!"

Octavia looked up at the towering figure in the linen blouse. She returned, involuntarily, the draughtsman's smile as the friendly grey eyes looked down into her own.

"What is it?" she inquired.

"That window in the wall between the corner towers. I have taken out the little windows and put in that big one; and it pulls the whole thing together. Doesn't it?"

"Yes, it is certainly better: very *much* better!"

His enthusiasm was contagious.

Jumping down from his perch he exclaimed, "Get up there yourself."

"No."

"Yes, get up! It is the only way to see the whole effect. I will hold you."

Somewhat to her own surprise Octavia put a hand in one of his, then found herself standing upon the high stool, surveying the western elevation of the restored castle.

"Why, yes, one does get the whole effect. It is really impressive."

Then, while she was up there, he laid other drawings before her, and she saw for the first time the effect, as a whole, of the various elevations—her castle in its transformation. And she now realized more fully the importance of the undertaking, this rebuilding of walls and towers and terraces. She also realized, for the first time, that all these restorations, on such a scale, implied an expenditure of money that neither her father nor grandfather could afford. For, while the Drumworth revenues were princely, so also was the Drumworth cost of living. So also were the Drumworth debts. And in the stately struggle between the present Earl and his expenses the Earl was not always the victor.

When all the drawings had been placed in review the visitor remarked, in her most gracious manner:

"But you have not told me why these drawings are being made."

"For some London architects."

"So you said: but why are they being made?"

With a slight shrug of the shoulders, as if protesting ignorance, he answered:

"Perhaps for some historical society—or architectural publication. I am merely employed, you know, by those architects."

"But *why* are these drawings being made? For whom, and for what purpose? You surely must know."

"No, I really do not."

From her high position, looking down upon the top of his head, she could not see his face as this reply was given. But it failed to satisfy her.

Again forgetting, for the moment, her old straw hat, her gingham apron and soiled gloves—forgetting, in fact, the gardener's daughter, she said, curtly:

"Then help me down. I have seen enough."

He helped her to alight, gently and deferentially, but with a firm, steadying hand.

"Angry again?" And in the familiar grey eyes had come a troubled expression. His manner became more serious. "I would like to tell you everything, to keep nothing from you. This making a mystery of it is detestable, but really, I am bound to secrecy."

"Then whoever employs these architects is concealing the purpose of the restorations?"

"Just for the present, yes."

"How soon is this awful secret to be divulged?"

"I really don't know."

"Do the owners of the castle know about it?"

"I think so. They know that I am making the drawings."

"And you know all about it yourself?"

Reluctantly he nodded assent. "But I do not know who is employing the architects."

"And you, you say, have promised not to divulge the plot?"

"Yes, but please do not blame me for that. And don't call it a plot. Secrecy is often required in building projects and for perfectly honorable reasons. I would gladly tell you whatever I know, but you surely understand my position."

She made no reply.

"Don't you?"

"I suppose so." But she spoke with no sympathy. Disturbing suspicions were crowding into her brain. She was moving slowly away when she stopped, and turned partly toward him.

"Are the reasons in this case perfectly honorable?"

"Perfectly honorable, yes."

"But somebody might be ashamed, perhaps, if the real purpose were known?"

"No, he would not be ashamed. He merely prefers that it be not made public."

"Who?"

At this he smiled. "On my honor, I do not know.

But, really, Miss Gardener, one has to keep his wits about him when you are in earnest."

Thus recalled to herself—or rather to the person she was representing—she smiled, but with an effort.

"Well, perhaps it is none of my affair. But I know the castle so well, and am so fond of it, that you must pardon my curiosity."

"Pardon it! I should not blame you for having all sorts of suspicions—of myself included."

"No, hardly that. But do you prefer that I shall not divulge this awful secret? That I shall not speak of having seen these drawings?"

"I should be very grateful if you would so behave."

"Very well, I will so behave."

"Thank you."

"Good morning."

"Good morning."

And she departed.

VI

A DOG AND A TALE

ENTERING her own garden Octavia sat upon a bench and did some thinking. It was a pleasant spot, this flower garden in the June sunshine, with a fragrance of old box in the air. But full enjoyment of this environment was marred by certain questions which persistently intruded themselves.

Why should her father make a secret of this architect and his work? And who of her family so rich as to undertake these prodigal restorations? If undertaken by some society or institution, why any secrecy? And, above all, why should her father conceal from his own daughter, from the sole heir of the castle itself, such a supremely important—almost public—undertaking? These unanswered questions simply deepened the mystery. But they strengthened her resolve to learn the truth. Her first thought was to question Auntie George. But were Auntie George not bound to secrecy she would already have imparted the desired knowledge. Perhaps she, too, was in ignorance. For a brief moment Octavia entertained the idea—or tried to—that per-

haps her father was doing it as a surprise to his daughter. But this idea, unfortunately, was too good to last—a dream too beautiful to bear the light of day—too cruelly out of harmony with her father's financial condition. For, while having no precise knowledge of the business matters of her family, she knew certain things. She knew of the reckless expenditures of her grandfather, the present Earl. And her father, Lord Aylesden, good intentioned but also with a mind on pleasure bent, had not proved successful as a redeemer of shrunken fortunes. But there was one question more disturbing than all the others, and it recurred more persistently. What was, what *could* be, the reason for this secrecy?

That day, however, brought no chance for enlightenment. Being an educated person, Octavia realized the importance of architecture as a fine art. She remembered that noble families had encouraged its disciples. Therefore, on the following morning, in the gingham apron and old straw hat, she again wended her way toward the Baronial Hall.

The architect, when she arrived, was standing on the stool looking down at his work, unaware of her presence. But he had a companion this morning, and as this companion advanced to greet Octavia she uttered an exclamation. It was not a cry of joy or admiration. That Ethan Lovejoy should have a dog—even a mongrel bulldog—did not surprise her; but she was surprised that a person of any kind,

architect or otherwise, should select for companionship a creature so triumphantly vulgar as this present animal.

The beast came toward her with wagging tail and other manifestations of cordiality. Her involuntary exclamation caused Lovejoy to look behind him. Then he turned about and jumped down from his elevation.

"Good morning. Don't mind him. He isn't half so bad as he looks."

Moving around the dog in a semicircle, to avoid any possible contact, Octavia stood before the drawings.

"Is that what you call a section?"

"Yes. It shows the interior along a given line."

"What is that hole that looks like an open cellar just outside there?"

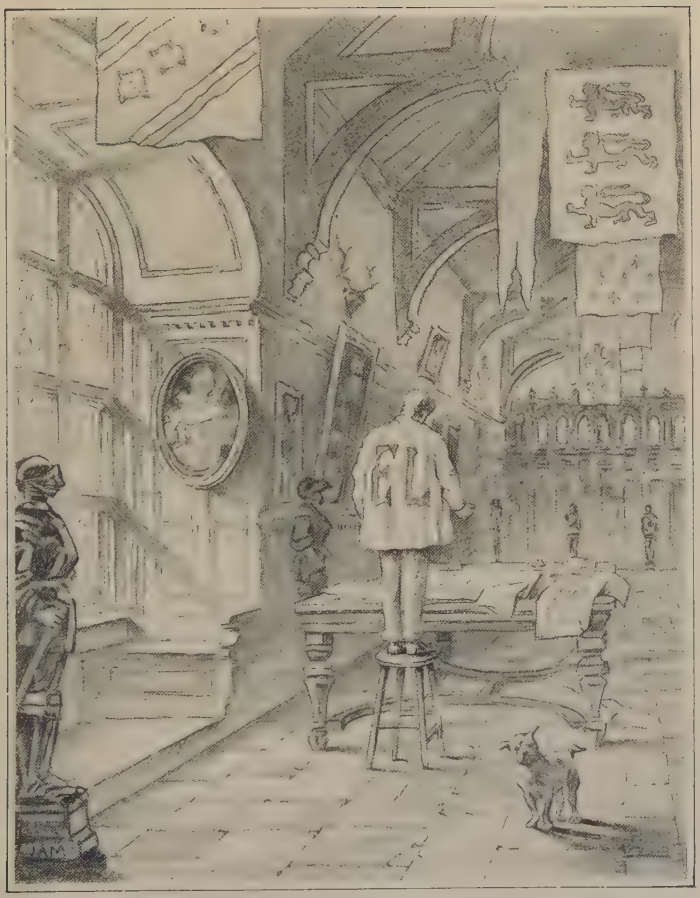
"The old moat. It is there now, but all filled up and overgrown with bushes. If cleaned out it would look as it does here."

"Yes, I suppose it would. And you have restored the drawbridge."

He then explained certain things about the drawbridge. After further questions had been answered, Octavia moved away and took her usual seat in the great window.

Then after a brief silence, broken by a long-drawn sigh from Octavia, the draughtsman looked up. "I hope you are not tired of life this morning."

"I am."



"BUT HE HAD A COMPANION THIS MORNING—"

"What! Already?"

"My age is not measured by years."

"Gracious! Why, you must be the oldest woman in the world!"

"No. There may be older ones. But after twenty years of life one has seen it all."

The draughtsman studied her face to see if a joke were intended. But the face was more than serious; it was sad. She continued, wearily: "There are no surprises; nothing new. We do the same old things. We think the same old thoughts. And as for people, they are more and more alike as they get older; duller, flatter, more selfish; and more deadly tiresome."

These words were uttered in a tone of mingled annoyance and despair.

The draughtsman raised his eyebrows, whistled, then went on with his work. "If this is your condition at twenty what an inspiriting old thing you will be at fifty. Your husband will seek the refrigerator for warmth."

"There will be no husband."

"You mean he will have run away?"

She smiled. "Very likely."

"Small blame to him!"

"What I mean is that I shall never marry."

"Ah! so soon? Of course you know when a girl makes that remark she has selected the man."

With decision she repeated, "I shall never marry."

Ethan Lovejoy looked down at the dog "Old

man, did you ever hear such twaddle?" Then, after rubbing out a line and redrawing it, "You may not suspect it, but the man who marries you will be the bravest thing yet."

"Indeed!"

"I am sorry to break your heart, but personally, I would as soon think of offering myself to—to—the Parthenon."

"Am I so *passée* as that?"

"Not *passée,* although you may feel the same age; but because you are both so everlastingly superior; so much better and more altitudinous than anything in your own neighborhoods."

Octavia frowned, then smiled, opened her lips to say something but changed her mind. Instead, she studied the dog, who had followed her to the window. He was now sitting upon the floor in front of her looking up into her face in silent admiration. Octavia returned this look with one of freezing contempt. Had the dog been familiar with his own appearance he would have expected nothing else. Grace and beauty did not abide with him. His general dimensions were those of a large fox terrier, but he was heavily built, and had thicker legs. With the exception of a dark brown patch over the left eye and another one about the size of your hand in the middle of his back, he was white. That is, the prevailing tint may have been white in his early youth, but a prolonged intimacy with back alleys, gutters and all kinds of weather had resulted in a

brownish, miscellaneous color that no single word could express. The black patch over the left eye gave him a devil-may-care look that caused pardonable misgivings as to his moral character. The general impression was not of a conservative, law-abiding dog. This unfavorable impression was enhanced by one or two ancient but still visible scars upon his person.

Ethan Lovejoy, looking up from his drawing, observed the open adoration of the animal and the visitor's failure to respond. Going on with his work he remarked:

"You seem to have made another conquest."

Octavia frowned. "He is simply hideous. Haven't I seen him about the village?"

"Very likely. He was there when I came, a week ago. I bought him yesterday."

"Who owned him?"

"Nobody."

"Nobody would—if they could help it. But if nobody owned him how could you buy him?"

"I bought him of himself. Three chops was the price. And he has stuck to me like a brother ever since."

After regarding him in silence for a moment Octavia murmured, "Poor thing! How unnecessarily ugly he is!"

"Well, yes," said Ethan. "But then, you know, it is not always fair to judge by appearances. He may have the heart of a poet."

"More likely of a burglar, or a highwayman. What sort of dog do you call him?"

"I had not presumed to call him anything, yet. I should think his father might be a fox terrier, his mother a bulldog, and his remoter ancestors almost anything. If he has uncles and aunts who are pugs, great danes, or even short-eared rabbits, I should not be surprised."

For a moment or two Octavia studied this newcomer, looking down into his adoring eyes with a disdainful indifference that would have chilled the heart of one of her own species. "You surely are not going to keep him."

"I am afraid I am. You see, I made the first advances, so I am bound in honor, as it were. The village of Drumworth has never appreciated him. And he is so very happy at finding a fellow who appears to like him, even a little bit, that I—well, I really haven't the heart to drive him off. Are you sure you don't want him? He likes you. Anybody can see that."

The only reply to this was a slight curl of the lip as she turned her head toward the window.

"If a dog loves you," said Lovejoy, "and he always loves somebody—he asks nothing but the pleasure of your company. He demands no sacrifice, but is glad to risk his own life to save yours."

The truth of this Octavia conceded by a movement of the head, and glanced down at the dog. But, with a sigh, she again looked out the window.

Her attempts at admiration were failures. Verily this dog, in the perfection of his ugliness, surpassed all other dogs!

"I must think of a good name for him," said Ethan Lovejoy.

"What is his present name?"

"He is only known in the village as Jim Pollack's pup."

"That horrid Jim Pollack!" exclaimed Octavia. "He went to prison last winter for killing his wife." And she regarded her four legged admirer with increasing horror. This new horror, however, caused a gleam of compassion. "I suppose the bad name of his master has clung to the poor brute and made him an outcast."

"Probably. He certainly is an outcast—among humans. But I have noticed he has friends among dogs. Dogs are far less critical than humans: also broader minded."

"I believe they are."

"Of course they are: more honest, more forgiving and devoted. There is an awful chasm, morally, between men and dogs. Imagine this dog—or any other dog—killing his wife! By the way," and he got up and went to his coat at the further end of the long table, and took a paper from a pocket, "did you ever see this?"

But, as Octavia extended a hand to take the paper he scowled, and withdrew it. "Tell me first, are you fond of dogs? Otherwise it would be wasted on you."

She smiled. "Indeed I am!"

Then he gave it to her. And while she was reading it he strolled slowly across the hall, and back again.

This was the verse:

MY DOG

The curate thinks you have no soul;
I know that he has none. But you,
Dear friend, whose solemn self-control
In our four-square, familiar pew,

Was pattern to my youth—whose bark
Called me in summer dawns to rove—
Have you gone down into the dark
Where none is welcome, none may love?

I will not think those good brown eyes
Have spent their light of truth so soon,
But in some canine Paradise
Your wraith, I know, rebukes the moon,

And quarters every plain and hill,
Seeking its master. * * * As for me,
This prayer at least the gods fulfil:
That when I pass the flood, and see

Old Charon by the Stygian coast
Take toll of all the shades who land,
Your little, faithful barking ghost
May leap to lick my phantom hand.

"Perfect!" she murmured. "And I believe the dog will be there. Who wrote it?"

"I don't know. I found it in a magazine. I am sorry dogs cannot read it." He replaced it in the coat pocket and returned to his drawing. "But

what shall I call this chap? Can't you suggest a good name — something appropriate, and rather pretty?"

"Pretty! Why not call him Æsop? He was the plainest man in history."

"Æsop? Well, Æsop was honest so far as we know; but it doesn't abbreviate well. People might call him 'Soppy.' And 'Soppy' doesn't fit this person. His name should be more suggestive of beauty, or gentle blood. What do you say to Prince, or Narcissus?"

A faint but derisive smile curled Octavia's lip as she murmured, "Gentle blood! He is the living emblem of all that is ugly and baseborn."

The architect straightened up and wheeled about on his stool. "Baseborn! Why not? Just the name for him. Let's call him Baseborn."

"You pretended to be his friend, yet you give him a ridiculous name."

"Ridiculous? Baseborn ridiculous? Oh, you don't mean that! It merely puts him in the same class, socially, with some excellent people; Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, for instance. What a terrible snob you must be, way down in your horticultural heart!"

Octavia flushed, and in her reply was a note of anger. "I am *not* a snob. Call him Baseborn if you like. No earthly name can be more absurd than the dog himself."

The architect whistled, gently; then, without look-

ing up, "When I spoke of your being a snob I meant it in a complimentary sense."

"Then your language was unfortunate."

"Well—I don't know. The moon, for instance, the distant, haughty, celestial moon to whom dogs bark in vain and whom we all love and respect is an offish thing, and might be called a snob."

"You implied a contempt on my part for the twelve apostles."

"Well, now, be honest. Imagine Matthew, Mark, Luke and John in modern garb entering the Drumworth pew—you have seen it probably, the great square pew just in front of the pulpit, with the coat of arms carved on it?"

There was no answer.

He repeated, "You have seen it?"

"Yes."

"If instead of being a gardener's daughter you were the Lady of Drumworth would you not consider it an impertinence if those four persons were shown into your pew?"

"I should not."

"Remember, they were workingmen, and socialists."

"It would make no difference."

"Excuse me, but I don't believe you. You have a very scornful nose for a horticultural person and at times a rather snifty expression about the mouth. I am pop sure you could be quite nasty to those apostles."

Octavia remained silent. She was wondering if there was truth in this remark about her mouth. The possibility troubled her. Among her acquaintances were several persons with "snifty" mouths or manners; and it was a thing that offended her. Now, to suspect that this man, in friendly, playful innocence had given her the truth was distressful and mortifying.

With eyes still upon his work the architect went on, in a reflective tone: "Curious, isn't it, how people take the greatest pride in the wrong things? They never become arrogant or supercilious because they are modest, kind-hearted or unselfish. But if they happen to inherit good luck they can be quite unpleasant. In fact they are pretty sure to develop foolish traits."

Octavia turned toward him and in a low voice but with some earnestness said, "I never thought of that before. It is really quite true, isn't it?"

"Nothing truer. The dog that saves a child is never so well pleased with himself as the peacock who inherits feathers."

Octavia nodded approval. "Yes, it is perfectly true—perfectly true." Extending a foot until the toe of her shoe was beneath Baseborn's chin she gently raised his head. As his eyes, always adoring, gazed up into her own, she inquired, "Would you save a person, Baseborn, at the risk of your life?"

Baseborn's real answer comes later in this history. At present he merely wagged his tail.

The architect went on with his work.

Baseborn, who had shown little interest in his own christening, continued to regard the lady with upturned face and enchanted eyes. Occasionally he turned a brief glance toward the architect. But these glances were merely from a passing curiosity as to his benefactor's movements.

Nothing was heard in the old hall for a few moments, except the hummings of operatic airs and the suppressed whistling of an enthusiast, absorbed —apparently—in his drawing.

Octavia, with hands folded in her lap, gazed dreamily through the open casement, over the quiet sunlit garden. Through this open window came floating in, with the soft June air, the odor of box and roses. It was a soothing atmosphere, inviting to repose and meditation.

At last the worker straightened up. Then he turned upon his seat and faced the lady at the window. Tapping his chin with his pencil, he said:

"Speaking of ghosts, do you—"

"We have not spoken of ghosts."

"I should say 'speaking of ghosts for the first time,' do you happen to know why there are so many more of them in castles than in cottages?"

"Because artistic harmonies require a castle. A ghost needs shadowy places to emerge from, and vanish into. He would not appear to advantage in a little cottage."

"No, that is not the real reason. But I will tell you if you want to hear it."

"Is it very silly?"

"Reasonably silly. But enlightening."

"Then you may begin."

"It is a long story."

"Never mind."

He laid down his pencil, came over to the window and sat on the opposite seat. As he crossed one leg over the other Baseborn placed himself in contact with the foot that remained upon the floor—as dogs do—and remained in this position, never moving his eyes from Octavia's face. And the look was of adoration—whole souled and self forgetting.

Octavia, in turn, as she met this enraptured gaze, felt a deeper sympathy for Baseborn's extraordinary ugliness. His battered features, his disreputable patch over one eye, his square, pugnacious head and parti-colored face, all formed, to her, a combination painfully repulsive. It seemed needlessly cruel that any one creature should, through no fault of his own, be so forbidding of aspect, so odiously vulgar.

But Baseborn, if he suspected this antipathy, had no resentment. And oh, how different his opinion of herself!

Octavia, after enduring for a moment the sight of Baseborn's countenance, closed her eyes, and sighed.

"As I have just been reading the Arabian Nights," said Ethan Lovejoy, "we will play that you are the Khalif's daughter, and that Baseborn is a beautiful princess."

With an involuntary glance at the dog, Octavia laughed. "No! My imagination fails!"

Baseborn, however, kept a serious face.

"And I," said the draughtsman, "as Lovebad the sailor—or Sinjoy the barber—will now narrate the tale of

Why There Are More Ghosts in Castles Than in Cottages

One morning, in answer to a commanding knock, St. Peter threw open the golden gate. Before him stood a lady of ancient lineage.

"This is heaven?"

"Yes, madam."

"You are St. Peter?"

He bowed. "At your service."

Then she gave her own name and title. Again he bowed.

Then she gave the titles of her father, her husband and of some remote ancestors.

St. Peter bowed again.

"These names," she said, "are perhaps familiar to you."

Regretfully he shook his head. "We hear so many names it is impossible to remember them all."

"No one would ask you to remember them all. I

should suppose, however, that certain names, having stood for generations high above the common herd, might fix themselves upon the dullest memory."

"You must pardon my forgetfulness, but names up here shine not from hereditary honors, but from individual merit. This is a pure democracy."

The lady frowned, and raised her chin. "What did you say?"

The Keeper of the Gate repeated his remark.

She seemed incredulous. "Is it possible? Are you telling me the truth?"

"Yes, madam."

"Do you mean to say that in heaven there are no social distinctions, no upper classes?"

"No, madam."

"Outrageous!"

"Let us understand each other, dear friend. It is—"

"Do not call me dear friend, if you please. I am not here to be patronized—by a fisherman."

"As you prefer, madam. I was merely going to ask if you anticipated an aristocracy with such social conditions as flourish upon the earth you have just quitted?"

"I did."

St. Peter raised his eyebrows and stroked his beard. "You hoped to find here a class that takes the best of everything as a natural right?"

"That is exactly what I mean."

"You must prepare for disappointment. We have no such class."

"How unjust!" And the lady bit her lips in an effort to repress her indignation.

St. Peter appeared surprised. "Unjust? The absence of such privileges unjust?"

"Of course it's unjust. Grossly unjust, uncivilized, barbaric—and dishonorable!"

"Oh, my dear madam! Not dishonorable!"

"It's unjust anyway."

"Unjust to whom?"

"To us who are accustomed to it—and expect it."

"Your point of view is interesting. But console yourself, madam, with this knowledge, that if you had been consigned to that Other Place instead of here you would have found class distinctions of the most aggravated form."

"I should much prefer it."

"I hardly think so. Those who were at the top while on earth are the humblest workers in the lower regions. Moreover, a humiliating and most obsequious deference to their betters is perpetually exacted."

"And who are their betters?"

"The meanest and most vindictive spirits from among those you patronized on earth."

The lady, with a look of horror, gasped, and took a backward step.

"Awful! Awful! Incredible!"

"There is a German princess, for instance, a

haughty person, who took her ancestry very seriously. Some people do, you know."

"Which is perfectly right and proper."

"So she thought. For the last eight months she has been in Purgatory as scullery maid to a cook she once discharged for impertinence."

"Abominable!" exclaimed the lady of ancient lineage. "Shameful! Perfectly outrageous!"

"But you must remember, madam, that a great variety of similar conditions is what constitutes hell."

Then with a frown, but speaking in a regretful tone, he added, "Pride, you know, is severely punished."

The lady grew pale. "But what am I to do? I really could never be happy here on equal terms with everybody."

"There is a third course. You can return to earth and still inhabit your ancestral mansions."

"Return to life? Oh, by all means! That is perfectly satisfactory."

"Excuse me. Not return to life exactly, but as a disembodied spirit."

"A ghost?" And the lady shuddered.

St. Peter nodded.

The lady closed her eyes, and reflected. "If I choose that course must I remain a ghost forever?"

"The usual term is a year."

"Then, if I preferred, I could enter here?"

"Yes."

"And if I did not prefer it I should still remain a ghost?"

"You would not prefer it."

"I might."

"Such a thing has never happened."

"What! Not once?"

"Not once during the twenty centuries this heaven has been established."

"This heaven! Then there are other heavens?"

"Oh, yes! Ours is comparatively new. There are the heavens of Buddha, of Mohammed, and several other Oriental places: also the seven heavens of Swedenborg, to say nothing of the happy hunting grounds of the North American Indian, and of sundry deserving heathen."

The lady's face brightened. "But I might prefer one of those. Buddha's, for instance—a paradise of Caste!"

"No Christians are admitted."

The lady bowed her head, and closed her eyes. She felt like weeping. Pride, however—and pride was her ruling attribute—sustained her. When she raised her head she looked St. Peter calmly in the eyes. "I will go back to earth for a year."

Which she did. And this tale accounts for so many ghosts in castles and so few in the dwellings of the poor.

When the tale ended there was a silence. Octavia, after a suspicious glance at the speaker, looked out

the window with an expression which may have meant weariness, or disapproval.

"I am afraid you don't like it," he said.

"I consider it sacrilegious—and impertinent."

"Why impertinent?"

Then Octavia remembered that she was a gardener's daughter, and inquired, carelessly, "What is the moral?"

"The moral? Oh, well, if there must be a moral I suppose it is, that—er—pride is dangerous baggage. When you and I are resting quietly in our graves, or sporting in celestial fields, the shivering shades of Lady Georgiana—or even Lady Octavia—may be gliding at stroke of midnight through the corridors of Drumworth Castle."

VII

A WOMAN'S FACE

"A SILLY tale," said Octavia, "with a foolish moral."

"A foolish moral! Marry! Just listen to that!" and he raised his eyes to heaven and slowly shook his head.

"Have you never heard," she inquired gently, "that you cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear?"

He nodded, and smiled. "Nor a camel's hair shawl out of a king's whiskers."

After a pause he added, "I suppose Voltaire was right when he said England is like a hogshead of its own beer; the top is froth, the bottom dregs, the middle excellent."

Octavia frowned. She felt a rising anger. All her self-control was needed to suppress a hot reply to this amazing insolence. But her swift, involuntary glance at his face met an expression of serenity and cheerful innocence. Without noticing her own expression he went on, in a reflective tone: "But if we selected our own ancestors as carefully as we do those of our horses we might have an aristocracy

that stood for something. If, for instance, Ben Franklin had married Sapho, you would expect interesting descendants."

As this was too silly for serious consideration Octavia merely closed her eyes and, leaning back, rested her head against the old wainscoting of the window.

"But when Lord Drinkmore marries Lady Featherbrain the results are—well, they are—what we see about us."

Octavia made no answer. But on her face, as she opened her eyes and regarded the draughtsman, there was a look of displeasure and suspicion.

"But we cannot blame the Drinkmores and Featherbrains," he continued, "for they would be traitors to their class if they married beneath them. Drinkmore's family would surely have discouraged his attentions to Sapho. And just imagine how Lady Featherbrain's social position would have suffered if she married Ben Franklin. He was of common origin, as of course you know."

"Very amusing."

He smiled—a smile of encouragement, as from an adult to a child. "I am glad you find it amusing. When you find wisdom amusing you have opened the door to knowledge."

Octavia concealed her annoyance by turning her face toward the garden. She remembered that these remarks were being addressed to a gardener's daughter, and she tried to behave accordingly. It

required, however, considerable forbearance to remain silent in the face of such patronizing impertinence. But the architect went on quietly with his drawing. After a moment he added, in a serious tone:

"Perhaps we could do better than marry Franklin to Sapho. What do you think?"

There was no reply.

"It might be a better match for the purpose if Solomon married George Eliot."

Indifferently, after a contemptuous pause, the lady inquired: "Was George Eliot so very wise?"

"No, not wise: but intellectual. There's an awful gulf, you know, between wisdom and learning."

"For my own personal companions," said Octavia, "I should prefer the more simple children of Drinkmore."

"Probably: if you are not easily bored."

"But I *am* easily bored." And she spoke emphatically, ending with a sigh.

"Then you would be bored stiff by his average lordship. For when his average lordship weds the corresponding female and keeps it up for generations the descendants are—well, they are not exhilarating."

Now, as it happened, Octavia was often wearied by the conversation of her male acquaintance. And her acquaintance consisted largely of the "average lordship."

In fact, the reason of these present visits lay in

the unwonted agitations—the shocks, resentments and constant surprises in this man's ideas. His points of view were a novelty. To her conventional training and habits of thought they came as flashes of light through obscuring clouds. Somewhat painfully—yet with an unacknowledged pleasure—her horizon was suddenly enlarged. Both him and his opinions she regarded with a certain fear—a sort of guilty fascination.

His last remark was followed by a silence longer than usual. Lady Octavia was reflecting. She had learned that this man often presented his ideas, whatever their nature or the strength of his convictions, in playful language, or, as amusing nonsense. With him, apparently, a serious thought, or even a solemn truth, lost nothing by a touch of humor.

As she reflected she began to wonder if she was to go through life meeting only the intellectual refuse of the world. This discovery, or suspicion, was disturbing. At last, in a meditative tone, more to herself than to him, "It is certainly a new idea that noble birth should be an obstacle in life."

"An obstacle? Well, I should say not! Do you happen to have read Pascal?"

"No."

"He says that good birth gives a man, at eighteen, the distinction and respect an ordinary man would acquire, on his merits, at fifty. A gain of thirty years at one stroke."

"I suppose that is true."

"If ever I have children," said the draughtsman, "I shall impress upon them the advantages of noble birth and advise them to inherit titles."

Then, after a stolen glance at the back of her head, which was still toward him, "Take, for instance, these Drumworths. They occupy a front seat wherever they go. And I suppose they have a sense of importance that would paralyze humble workers in the vineyard like you or me. And to think that Shakespeare, Galileo or Columbus, in the presence of an earl, or even a Fatacres, would have stood hat in hand! Verily, the Human Comedy is a wondrous thing."

As his listener continued to look, in silence, out the window, he inquired:

"What is your opinion?"

"Perhaps these Drumworths are not so conceited as you think."

"Oh, the Drumworths may be all right. I was speaking more of the Human Comedy as a play, and casting no aspersions upon the actors. But apropos of Drumworths and belted earls, why is it one never hears of belted architects or belted barbers? Are there especially sanctifying properties in a belt? And what kind of a belt is it?"

No reply was given.

Then he recited, in a maner suited to heroic verse:

> Shall honest housewife longer brook
> The tyranny of belted cook?

What do you think of that?"

Octavia, regarding him with a look of disdainful pity, breathed a long drawn, weary sigh: "I wonder if you ever realize how very silly you are at times?"

"Yes, indeed! It is the unbending of a great mind."

"Really!" and with a contemptuous shrug she again turned away. Then, still looking toward the garden, "Are all architects silly?"

"All the best ones."

For a few moments the architect seemed absorbed in his work. Occasional fragments of operas, marches, waltzes and popular songs were whistled and hummed as he bent earnestly over his drawing or stood aloft on his stool.

The lady in the window, after languidly watching him for a time, inquired, "Where did you get that extraordinary garment you have on?"

"Paris. The students in the ateliers all wear them."

"Why such large initials on the back? Were you afraid the treasure might be stolen?"

"That was exactly the reason. The blouses are all alike. But if another student took this one I could recognize it."

"I should think so—and from any distance!"

Then it so happened that Ethan Lovejoy, for a longer time than usual, refrained from all attempts at music.

So silent was the Old Hall, so peaceful the garden beneath the open window, that no sounds

reached Octavia's ears except those from the architect's table—from his pencil as it moved along the drawing, from the faint click of his wooden triangle against the T square, and the occasional rustle of a sheet of tracing-paper. The subdued and measured snore of Baseborn's siesta was no disturber of the peace. It merely served as a soothing accompaniment to the prevailing silence. This silence was restful. It invited one to reverie, and to easy thoughts. Octavia, in a day dream, sat looking through the open window over the sunny fields, to the grey, square tower of the village church, a mile away.

As the cessation of an accustomed noise often attracts our notice, so Octavia, after a time, awakened to the fact that no sounds were coming from the neighboring table. Idly she turned her head in that direction. Her eyes opened a trifle wider as she discovered that Ethan Lovejoy, his chin in his hand, was gazing intently toward her in what seemed a very earnest and absorbing study of herself. As the familiar grey eyes encountered her disapproving glance their owner showed a slight embarrassment. He straightened up, made as if to go on with his work, then changed his mind.

"Excuse my staring at you, but there are moments when you bear a strong resemblance to a friend of mine."

Octavia nodded, but in a barely perceptible manner, as if the statement, while possibly correct, was not of surpassing interest.

From beneath his blouse he drew forth, out of a waistcoat pocket, a card case. From this case he took a photograph, about the size of a visiting card, and brought it over and held it before the lady's face. Then it was that Octavia's indifference vanished; so suddenly, so swiftly and with so unexpected a shock that she caught her breath. She suppressed an exclamation—almost doubting her own eyes. Her lips parted. Her eyebrows went up —then down, and for an instant her breathing ceased. She was looking at her own portrait!

Into her neck and cheeks, and even to the roots of her hair, came a tingling—of shock, and indignation. She straightened up, drew back, frowned, blinked and looked again. Yes, her own portrait!—the one taken a month ago, at Windsor, with other guests at the Queen's luncheon. And as she realized that this man must have cut it out, and was carrying it in his pocket, she experienced yet another tingling along her spine and through the roots of her hair; this time of outraged dignity—and hot anger. Controlling herself, however, she merely frowned, then closed her eyes, not daring, on the instant, to trust herself to speak.

Lovejoy withdrew the photograph. "You don't seem pleased."

"I am not."

"Well, but good heavens! She is a mighty handsome girl, *I* think."

Octavia made no reply. Still with an angry color

in her cheeks, she looked away, through the open casement. She knew this portrait was for sale, but she had only considered it as one of a group. That a man should carry it about, alone by itself in his pocket, was a thing she had never thought of, and could not bear to think of now. She felt vulgarized, cheapened, inexpressibly mortified. She was likely to become, according to this experience in publicity, the pocket companion, the apparent sweetheart, the "best girl" of any man, of any kind, who chose to buy her! Her impulse was to snatch the picture. Tightly she clenched her fingers, and tightly she shut her eyes to keep back tears of anger and humiliation.

"But don't you think she is pretty?" he persisted.

There was no answer. Octavia was biting her lips and was frowning, in suppressed anger, over the smiling landscape.

He withdrew the photograph and studied it himself. "There's no telling a woman's taste. Now, to me that's an exceptionally interesting face. And she's a howling swell, too."

Still receiving no attention he breathed a sigh—a somewhat ostentatious sigh—and returned to his work.

Octavia, for a moment, dared not trust herself to speak. Any display of feeling might lead him to suspect that it was her own portrait. And she desired, for many reasons, to preserve her incognito of the gardener's daughter. Yet, she tingled

with shame as she saw her portrait return to his pocket as an intimate and personal treasure. While striving to control her anger, and frowning upon the most conspicuous object in the foreground, which happened to be the guiltless Baseborn, she heard the architect's voice, reciting these lines:

"Abou Ben Lovejoy, may his tribe increase,
Awoke one morning from an architectural dream,
And saw within the sunlight of his room
An angel, exceeding cross—and sulking."

She turned toward him, but with her eyes still upon Baseborn. "You say the original of that picture is a friend of yours."

"Oh, yes!"

She merely closed her eyes, sincerely regretting that this man should so clearly prove himself a liar.

"That is," he went on, "I am a good friend of *hers*. I know her well. But she, poor thing! has not the pleasure of my acquaintance."

"Who is she?"

"Why ask such embarrassing questions? The shopkeeper could not tell me. And, perhaps, after all, it is just as well I should never know. If I discovered that she was an awful snob, or a crazy princess, or some nose-in-the-air begum, all the charm would be gone. A happy dream would end."

"How did you happen to get the picture?"

Ethan Lovejoy laid down his pencil, wheeled slowly about on his stool, placed one leg over the

other and clasped his hands around a knee. With his head inclined to one side as if to aid his memory —or his language—he thus replied: "It happened in London; a week ago Thursday. I was on my way to the station in a gentle but searching rain; my first journey to Drumworth. Having lots of time I stopped to look at a photograph in a shop window. But it proved to be the inevitable group of royalties and their usual playmates, so I turned away. Then, as an object of peculiar interest caught my eye, I stopped and looked again. At one end of the group, between the King and the Kaiser stood a young lady, this young lady; and her face—well—from that instant I was a goner. No use describing her face, for we have it here, but it was—and is—such an extraordinary, unprecedented, irresistible mixture of contradictory human traits that I was literally spellbound."

His listener turned her face for a moment still more toward the window as if for a better view of something in the old garden.

The architect continued: "At the moment the photo was taken, the King, the Kaiser and this girl were having, evidently, some little joke between them. All three were trying to repress a smile. And as I stood in the rain and looked into this girl's face, for I had lowered my umbrella to get my nose nearer the glass, I also began to smile—just from friendliness. I don't know how long I stood there, but one or two other people who also wanted to see

the picture began to crowd me gently as if they thought I must have had my fill. So I backed away, still smiling, and departed. But after I had gone about a block I began to feel strange yearnings. I realized, with shame, that I must go back and look some more. So, having time to burn, I did go back. For several minutes I again drank her in. Once more I smiled with her, as Baseborn here, might smile with the moon. Then I made a wild resolve. You must know that I was already carrying a fat valise, two rolls of drawings and an open umbrella, so I could not possibly manage that big photograph. But into the shop I went, and bought the thing. In a careless way, as if nobody cared much, I asked the shopkeeper who the person was, standing between the two monarchs. He said he didn't know. Being —presumably—a snob, he seemed ashamed of his ignorance. Then I took a pair of shears that were lying on the counter and proceeded to cut her out, that I might carry her in my pocket. But the shopkeeper, a most respectable and loyal patriot with gray side whiskers, put forth a hand in horror. 'You are cutting right through the King!' he exclaimed. 'Kings,' I said, 'are like the waves of the sea. When one disappears another takes his place. But a face like this is a thing apart, a pearl in the millionth oyster, and is worth any sacrifice.' When the next cut destroyed the Kaiser he muttered: 'If I had known, sir, that you were going to spoil the picture I would not have sold it to you.' But I

smiled upon him, a happy and perhaps imbecile smile. I told him that a beautiful woman was far above Kaisers. He seemed in doubt. But I put the lady in my safest pocket and sped away."

Octavia lowered her eyes. She seemed interested in Baseborn, who acknowledged the attention by raising his ears and wagging his tail.

"That shopkeeper," she said in a tone intended to express indifference, "must have thought you crazy."

Lovejoy nodded. "And if he had watched me in the train on the way down here that afternoon, he would have been sure of it. In order that others in the compartment should not suspect my folly I laid the portrait between the leaves of a book, where I could enjoy it, and I pretended to be reading."

Octavia said nothing. But the silence was misleading. It merely served, at the present moment, as a shield to an inward revolt. And it must be remembered, in justice to Octavia, that by her own family, and by all the countryside, she had been regarded, from birth, as a being of peculiar merit and importance. This perpetual worship had given its victim an exalted conception of her own personal sanctity. Now, to discover suddenly that she had become, in a sense, the property of a stranger, of the first man who happened to like her face, was to her the grossest profanation. She had become, it seemed, a public thing; her face a purchasable toy. And the thought was unbearable that this portrait of herself, which no earthly power could have induced

her to present to men of her acquaintance—even to those whom she best knew—had become the property of whosoever chose to carry it in his pocket. Her cheeks burned, and her fingers within the garden gloves were pinching one another. But her martyrdom was not yet complete. With this affront to all her finer feelings another and severer shock was yet to come.

As Ethan Lovejoy finished he had wheeled around as if to go on with his work. But, with an elbow on the table, his cheek against his hand as in a reverie, he went on, in a lower tone, his eyes upon the little portrait that he had again taken from his pocket and laid before him:

"Oh, but the happy hours we have passed together, this girl and I!"

He then repeated these lines:

> "And on her lover's arm she leant,
> And round her waist she felt it fold,
> And far across the hills they went
> In that new world which is the old.

We have walked through flowery fields, reclined in shady groves and danced together in palaces. Although I have known her but a week we have been wrecked in southern seas and lived for years, we two alone, upon a coral island. She is a splendid girl—a sacred thing. I shall frame this picture and keep her entirely to myself. I only showed it to you, you know, because of a certain resemblance.

But I shall keep her hidden away in some desk or drawer. No one shall ever see or know anything about her. Her real character I myself shall never know, although I have endowed her with every conceivable virtue. But there's a shadow to these sunny memories. For it's a melancholy thought that she herself, poor thing! has had none of these joys. Her own life, during these celestial years, may have been as commonplace and stupidly conventional as her companions in the photograph."

He paused, but without changing his position. His outraged listener dared not trust herself to speak. All her powers of will were needed to preserve an outward calm.

"Are you familiar," he inquired after a pause, "with those silent, moonlit, heavenly nights on Italian lakes?"

The lady at the window made no reply.

"Well, we have floated for hours in a narrow little skiff, so very close together, she and I, both in body and in spirit, that our souls were one. But perhaps you have never been in love and don't know what all that means."

Still silence at the window. No signs of attention from the averted face. He took up his pencil and went on with his work. Several moments passed before Octavia spoke, and then her voice, despite all efforts at control, was constrained and uneven.

"Do you think the lady would be pleased if she

knew her portrait was being carried about in your pocket?"

"She will never know. We are too far apart. Between this girl and such trash as you and me there is a bottomless gulf. Why, Kings and Kaisers bow down before her. She is miles and miles above the earth we tread. But her face, for me, has the fascination an evening star might have for any crawling thing, or any earth bound beast of burden—a donkey, for instance."

Octavia, still struggling to control her emotions, sat erect, and silent.

"I think," he went on, "what makes her so infernally seductive, perhaps, is the combination in her face of a certain girlish sensibility with an infinitude of unreasoning pride—and overwhelming and sincere conviction of her own superiority. Now that nose, for instance, is loftiness itself. And by the way, it is exactly like your own, isn't it?" and again he came over and held the picture before her. "If you will excuse my saying so, yours is a stately little nose. If you were a duchess you would have a perfect face to snub with, and to look offensively superior."

For an instant Octavia's eyes rested frigidly upon the picture. Then again she looked out the window. Ethan Lovejoy replaced the photograph in his pocket and went back to his table. He whistled gently as he tore off a piece of tracing paper and laid it over a portion of the castle.

"You do not appear to realize," said Octavia, "your own impertinence."

"Impertinence!" and he turned toward her with a look of amazement.

"Most emphatically."

"What an idea! Could I pay her a higher compliment? Why, in that group there were nearly twenty people—all the cream of the earth—and she was the only one I wanted. Moreover, it is my only experience of the kind. I am not given to collecting faces."

"Very likely, but she would be angry, mortified, disgusted if she knew it."

"Never!"

"If you had a sister would you like to have her portrait, under similar conditions, carried about by men who were strangers to her?"

Ethan Lovejoy stopped in his work, lowered his chin, and tapped his forehead with his pencil. "Why —er—I don't think I should object—if my sister didn't."

"But if your sister knew nothing about it."

"It would make all the difference who the man was."

"No, it would not. You know very well that this lady would be justly angry. So would her father and her brothers—if she had any."

He smiled. "Why do you mention father and brothers instead of mother and sisters? You are trying to scare me."

"I merely mentioned them because you are a man yourself and can better understand. I am appealing to your sense of honor."

"So bad as that?"

Octavia took her basket and stood up. "Then keep the picture and carry it about with you—and show it to your friends, and laugh and joke about it." And a pair of contemptuous, angry eyes looked down upon him.

"Now wait a minute, Miss Gardener. You travel too fast. Your sympathy for the victim carries you away. You are the only person to whom I have shown it, or might ever show it."

Octavia merely turned her glance severely upon Baseborn, who stood at her feet, gazing up. Then a clever idea came to her. With a more amiable expression she extended her hand. "Let me look at it again, for a moment."

He shook his head. "No you don't."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean you are too good a friend of hers. I don't trust you. You might keep it, or do some other awful thing."

"I will return it."

"Honest injun?"

This was a new expression to the lady, but she guessed at its meaning, and nodded. From the pocket beneath his blouse he produced the picture and laid it in her hand. She appeared to study it and to consider it more seriously. "I think, on the

whole, I had better keep it, as you are not treating her fairly."

"But I only lent it to you for a moment."

"As my duty to another woman I must keep it."

Slowly and solemnly he shook his head. "And after you promised to return it!"

"I did not say *when* I would return it."

"Really, I blush for you. Such a dishonest little trick!"

Then it was Octavia who blushed. "It is *not* a dishonest trick! In keeping it I am merely doing what I should like another woman to do for me."

"Ah, but you know very well you secured it by a trick! I did not give it to you."

"Well, I may return it. Consider it a loan, if you prefer. Good morning." And she walked away.

Out into the Garden of the Sleeping Beauty she passed. There, from above her, from the great window where she had been sitting a moment ago, came the architect's voice.

"Miss Gardener!"

She stopped, involuntarily, turned and looked up. Ethan Lovejoy was leaning out. Also at the open window was Baseborn standing on the wide, stone sill. And he also was looking down at her, his head cocked to one side, with ears alert, as if pleasantly excited by the situation. It was for a second only that Octavia paused. But before she could turn away the man cried out:

"If you have a spark of honor you will be ashamed of yourself before the sun goes down."

The lady's only reply, as she continued her walk, was a very slight but disdainful movement of the lips and eyebrows. Without looking back she knew that Ethan Lovejoy and Baseborn were still watching her as she moved, with outward indifference, along the garden path between the rows of overgrown box, until she disappeared beneath the ancient archway.

VIII

AMERICANA

BENEATH the cloistered arches and through her own garden Octavia walked, the victim of riotous emotions. Angry with this man for his liberties with her portrait, insulted by the freedom of his imaginings, she was, however, victorious in the possession of the photograph. Nevertheless, her manner of acquiring it had already brought a sense of shame. And this, in the nature of things, intensified her anger.

Marching slowly along the great terrace she tried to compose herself. She tried to banish the intruder from her thoughts before encountering the watchful glances of her family. But these efforts were brought to a sudden end by the exclamation of a servant who was hastening to meet her.

"Your ladyship! Mr. Rutherton is here."

"Oh, I forgot!" and Octavia quickened her steps.

Mr. Edward St. George Rutherton was not in the habit of being forgotten; never by the parents of marriageable daughters. One of the richest men in England, connected with the highest families, a bachelor of thirty-five, with a sound head, a kind heart and charming manner—and more than good-

looking—he was, upon all occasions, in every home, in every club, at any function, public or private, not only a welcome but a much desired guest. As traveler, scholar, philanthropist, wit, social luminary and "all around good fellow" he would have been a success without his millions.

Hastening through the great hall Octavia stopped for a moment and looked over the letters of the last mail as they lay upon the table. One of these letters was addressed to Mr. Ethan Lovejoy. As it bore a foreign stamp she gratified her curiosity and deciphered the postmark. The letter was from the City of New York in the United States of America. Whereupon a wise look came into her face. So her draughtsman was an American! Certain unfamiliar expressions he had used were now explained: also his absurd name of Ethan. Of course she had heard the name of Ethan, even in England, but it was rare. Whereas, in America, presumably nearly all the men were named Ethan. And, anyway, she did not like the name. While it was not so bad a name as Barebones, for instance, it was bad enough. Surely no man could be a hero with such a name as Ethan! In Drumworth village there was one Ethan Slopps, a harness maker whose name had always affected her unpleasantly.

As she held this letter Lord Aylesden entered. He was a tall, well built man whose features—with the exception of a somewhat heavy jaw and chin—were perfect.

"Father, who is Ethan Lovejoy?"

"Who?—oh—Ethan Lovejoy? That is a man I am having some business with. You know Rutherton is here?"

"Yes. I will be down in a moment. This is a curious stamp. Is your Lovejoy man an American?"

"I believe he is."

While descending the monumental staircase—rebuilt in the seventeenth century—she made two resolves. First: that she would now retaliate upon Mr. Ethan Lovejoy, the Yankee, for some of his freely expressed opinions on herself and her family. Whereby she might enjoy, perhaps, a little entertainment at his expense.

Second: as it was now clear that her father was deliberately and in cold blood keeping from his daughter the knowledge of these vast alterations of her own home, that daughter could now proceed with a clear conscience, and as a duty to herself, to unravel the mystery if it lay in her power. And she had confidence in her ability.

It was in accordance with the first of these resolves that the conversation at lunch, half an hour later, seemed to drift quite naturally in a transatlantic direction, particularly as Mr. Rutherton had recently returned from "the States." And their guest soon found himself enlightening his hosts as to the manner and customs of the Americans. Mr. Rutherton wore a close trimmed, pointed beard and

mustaches that were slightly assertive. He habitually raised his eyebrows when speaking, which gave additional animation to an already animated face. He liked to talk, and he talked well. Moreover, he was an attentive and patient listener. He had lived five years in the United States—"And although I have many warm friends among our cousins, five years is enough."

"Cousins!" exclaimed Lady Georgiana. "Suppose they were really our cousins! What an awful thought!"

"Tell me about the American women, Mr. Rutherton. They are very pretty, are they not?" And Octavia leaned slightly forward with an obvious yearning for knowledge that would have drawn fountains of information from much sterner stuff than Mr. Edward St. George Rutherton.

"Yes, pretty. But their voices—" and Mr. Rutherton raised his eyebrows and slowly shook his head.

"I have always heard," said Aunt George, "that they are noisy and unattractive."

"Hardly unattractive, I should say," interposed the Earl, "considering how they are gobbled up by various English dukes."

"By dukes in distress," said Mr. Rutherton. "Few women who offer a dowry of a million dollars are unattractive to an embarrassed nobleman."

"And did you find the men," Lady Octavia inquired, "even less attractive than the women?"

"No, not all! The men are far quieter than the

women. Less noisy and less pretentious. I like the men; they talk less and say more. The trouble with American women is that they are extremists; either frankly frivolous, or intellectual. And the intellectual American woman is an appalling thing."

"But why worse than other nationalities?"

"Because she talks a good deal more, a great deal faster and in a thinner voice. And her intellectuality is a pose. It never accomplishes anything. She merely absorbs a lot of useless knowledge—useless to her—and pumps it into others."

"But American women, as a rule, are very lively are they not?—very animated, quick witted and clever?"

"Yes. But so are American mosquitoes."

Lady Octavia's interest was gratifying, and the guest continued:

"An American dinner, for instance, to an Englishman before he gets hardened, is an exhausting experience. They have an idea, over there, that unless somebody is talking you are bored. So either you or the woman beside you is talking all the time."

"But when do you eat?" inquired Lord Aylesden.

"Between words."

"Fancy!" said Lady Georgiana. "That must be exceedingly tiresome; and quite wearing, after a while."

"It is. But after you once 'catch on,' as they say over there, you can make out a dinner by eating

faster than usual. The woman on either side of you asks nothing better than to do most of the talking."

"Fancy!" said Lady Georgiana.

Then followed a silence in which the four people partook leisurely of the food before them. And this food was deliciously cooked and daintily presented. For the Drumworth cook was an imported artist.

"You know the Duchess of Fanesbury?" Mr. Rutherton inquired of Lady Octavia.

"Yes. She came from the States."

"Well, she would not be considered especially nervous or chattery in her own country."

"Really!"

"Imagine living in such a country," said Lady Georgiana. "Dishonest men—for that is certainly their reputation—and *such* women!"

Into Octavia's sensitive face came a mixture of distress and wonder. "But surely, *all* the men are not dishonest."

"No, indeed! I knew some very honest ones. Collectively, however, I am afraid their reputation is deserved. You see, they are all in such a hurry to get on—to make money in the quickest way that they have no time to be too punctilious about it."

"It is all very inexcusable," said Lady Georgiana, "as some of them are descended from good English families. They certainly must have a sense of shame."

"Shame! Why, Lady Georgiana, their pride in

themselves is so stupendous, so solid, so laughable, that it ceases to offend. It is the one case in which their famous sense of humor fails."

"But the beggars must suspect," said Lord Aylesden, "how they are regarded by the rest of the world."

"Not a bit! As for the rest of the world, it has their contemptuous pity."

"Fancy!" said Auntie George.

"They consider us English slow and dull, the French frivolous and unreliable, the Germans stupid, the Italians behind the age and the Russians barbarians. They honestly believe themselves the unparalleled people. They take their high-pressure life in all seriousness."

"But Mr. Rutherton," protested Octavia, "you say they are dishonest, and yet you like them."

"Because they are often agreeable and entertaining companions, fair minded and generous. You might take many of them for cultivated Englishmen."

"Just fancy!" And Auntie George merely raised her eyebrows although she fully realized the absurdity of the statement.

"And they do not mean," continued Mr. Rutherton, "to be dishonest. In fact, they do not realize it. Although corrupt themselves, they despise a thief —unless the theft is big enough, when they respect it. For instance, a friend of mine, a most cultivated gentleman—several times a millionaire—is known

to have juggled with the funds of an insurance company, and to have pocketed, with a few of his friends, hundreds of thousands of dollars of the policy holders' money.

"What did they do to him?" inquired Lord Aylesden.

"Nothing whatever. Moreover, it was also discovered, in the course of an investigation, that he had robbed the stockholders of a railroad of several millions of dollars."

"Fancy!"

"Outrageous!" exclaimed Octavia.

"That," said Lord Aylesden, "is what Southworth and Hatfield did over here."

"Yes, but Southworth is in prison, and Hatfield will never return to England; whereas my American holds his head as high as ever and his social position has not suffered."

"Nice country," said the Earl.

"Just fancy!"

"But, in that country," inquired Octavia, "are there no laws for such crimes? Is there no punishment?"

"Yes, punishment for the minnows but not for the sharks. Nobody cares, however, so long as business is good."

Octavia made no further comment, but looked in pensive reverie through the great window of the dining room, out over the smooth, green level of Drumworth Park where a herd of deer were graz-

ing. At this point came another of those restful, nerve restoring silences which occur at British meals.

Later on, the repast finished, the four persons entered the long drawing-room. Here they paused before a large photograph of the King. This portrait had been recently presented by His Majesty to Octavia's father. Framed in silver, it rested in a prominent position upon one of the tables. The King in this picture was in full regalia. Much impressed by this portrait, the guest congratulated his host upon being the recipient of so personal a gift.

"But do you not think," and Octavia's tone implied an amiable regret, "that it loses something of its dignity by all those trinkets across the breast?"

Auntie George looked more closely at the portrait. "What trinkets, Octavia?"

"Those medals. They seem to cheapen the effect."

"Why, dear child!" exclaimed Auntie George, looking still more closely, "those, I think, are the orders of the Garter, the Bath, St. Patrick and the Imperial order of the Crown of India. The others are the highest and most exclusive foreign orders presented by other monarchs."

"I know they are, but monarchs are in the habit of exchanging those things just as they would exchange visiting cards. And they signify even less."

"Octavia!"

"Now if King George," Octavia went on in the

same tone of amiable regret, "should wear a string of visiting cards or empty watchcases across his front it would bear the same relation to his own personal exploits."

Autie George's eyes opened wider and her lips parted. Had her niece cursed the Church of England the shock could hardly have been more severe. Lord Aylesden frowned. But Mr. Rutherton, with elevated eyebrows, regarded the speaker in amused astonishment—and admiration. More color had come into Octavia's cheeks as she spoke these irreverent words, and it was evident that in the eyes of the guest, whatever his own opinion of the King's medals, the Lady Octavia was a fascinating study.

Auntie George could only exclaim in a whisper—and the whisper was hollow and sepulchral, "How *can* you, Octavia!"

"That is certainly a fresh view," said Mr. Rutherton. "I never thought of it before. We must admit those medals are not, in the strictest sense, rewards of merit, or records of achievement."

With a smile of recognition toward Mr. Rutherton, such as a Queen of Paradise might bestow upon any deserving angel, Octavia remarked, "But if such ornaments can afford any satisfaction to our sovereign I am sure it is not for us to object."

She turned away, still with the charming—but impersonal—smile, and moved gracefully through the drawing room toward the terrace. The others followed.

While Rutherton was enjoying one of his host's choicest cigars upon the terrace, Octavia, by a careless question, again started the guest upon the subject in which she had so suddenly taken an interest. And he depicted, in few words, the inevitable conditions in a new and purely commercial country where the people were, of necessity, imitative in social matters and backward in intellectual development, yet happy and selfsatisfied. And in so doing he innocently furnished Lady Octavia with ammunition for her attack upon the Yankee invader.

IX

A FATHER IS REASSURED

WHEN tea was served that afternoon in the library—a spacious, wide windowed room with a heavily timbered ceiling—Lady Georgiana, sitting alone with her nephew, spoke of the surprising change in Octavia's appearance during the last day or two—the new color in her cheeks, less weariness of manner with a livelier and more cheerful expression.

"Yes, I have noticed it. She looks better than she has for a year. More animation. More like her old self. How do you account for it?"

"I really can't say. I thought at lunch today it might be Mr. Rutherton's presence, but I remembered that yesterday also she had a better color."

"Glad of it. Hope it isn't temporary. I have always said, you know, that the poor child needs change and stirring up."

"But she won't take it. She always refuses to go away."

"Yes, worse luck. Even refuses to go to town for the season. But just at present she is certainly less languid. Takes more interest in things. May be the good weather."

Into Auntie George's face, which, with its perfect

features, should by rights have been beautiful—but was not—came an expression of emphatic denial. "This new color in her cheeks is too sudden. Good weather does not act with such rapidity. The change has all come within a day or two."

Lord Aylesden leaned forward and spoke in a lower tone. "Do you think there's a fighting chance of her taking either Hepsford or Rutherton? She would be happy with either. No better men in England. It would be horrible if she should fall in love with some impecunious chap."

With a slow, wise nod Lady Georgiana regarded her nephew. "Octavia does not suspect it herself, but I have taken excellent care that she meets no undesirable suitors. Her men friends are few. There is nobody in the field to interest her."

"You are sure of that?"

"Absolutely."

Into the father's face came a look of relief, immediately followed, however, by one of doubt. He laid down his cup, arose and began to move about the room. At last, standing before Auntie George and looking down with a serious face, he spoke in a subdued voice.

"I must say that it seemed to me at lunch that she did not behave at all like a—er—like a woman in love, don't you know—or even over much impressed by Rutherton himself."

Lady Georgiana closed her eyes, opened them slowly, and looked up with a faint smile; such as a

forgiving mother might bestow upon an idiot child.

"You men, Robert, are really very dull where women are concerned. Did you not observe her animation at moments? How attentively, almost eagerly she listened? You surely observed the contrast to her usual indifference when similar subjects are discussed?"

"Yes, but that is just what I fail to comprehend. I do not believe that a dainty, sensitive, romantic creature like Octavia can be entranced by such a subject. Americans! Gad! Do you think it was Rutherton's picture of the vulgarity of that half baked people and their screaming women to which she listened with transfigured face, with glistening eyes and changing color? No. I cannot believe it."

With a patient smile Auntie George again slowly closed and opened her eyes. "But if they were an interesting people you would believe it and understand it?"

"Naturally."

"Very well, then. Pray how *do* you account for her sudden interest in such an uncongenial subject?"

"Just the thing that bothered me. And it must have bored her."

"Listen, Robert. It was merely the cleverest way of entertaining Rutherton. He had been to America, so she drew him out and made him talk. The subtlest form of compliment. His vanity was fed. He enjoyed every moment of his visit."

"Yes, I saw that—but—er—I can't explain just

what I mean. To me, don't you know, she seemed more interested in Americans than in Rutherton."

"Coquetry. Just a woman's coquetry. And it is better, perhaps, that men are as blind as they are. What conceivable reason, what other motive could our Octavia have for listening to an essay on those impossible people?"

"I suppose you are right."

"And if you will recall the conversation, Robert, you will see that Rutherton was telling her nothing new. The inhabitants of the United States are not a newly discovered race—their sudden wealth, their voices, their assurance and vulgarity are known to everybody. And yet she listened, apparently, with eager interest."

"Yes, by Jove! And with a flush on her cheeks and eyes that glistened! She fooled *me,* too!"

After a silence, however, he added: "But hang it, Auntie George, there's this about it, and it—er—it—er—discouraged me. Several times, and when Rutherton was talking his best, Octavia just looked out the window in an absent-minded way—a kind of ecstatic reverie that was not a bit flattering to *him,* you know."

"Listen, Robert. A girl—and especially a girl that all men desire—must not fall into a man's arms as soon as he beckons, must she?"

"Of course not."

"Had she hung on every word of Rutherton's today and drunk him in with thirsty eyes he might despise a victory so cheaply won. He would feel,

and with reason, that she was his for the asking—even before the asking."

"Possibly."

"But if he goes away with the idea that Octavia has other thoughts than of him, and with some uncertainty as to the amount of interest he inspires, that very uncertainty will create a healthful anxiety, touch his pride, enliven his ambition and stir him to greater effort."

"You are quite right. Quite right."

"At the present moment he is not at all sure whether she cares for him or not; whether it was himself or his subject that interested her."

"Yes. You are right."

"But are you quite sure, Robert, that Rutherton wants to marry Octavia?"

After a glance toward the door, Lord Aylesden lowered his voice. "I am. He has been talking to me about it. He is dead in love with her. Clean gone."

Lady Georgiana's face brightened. "Then I can assure you there is not the slightest cause for anxiety. We may consider it *un fait accompli.*"

"Rough on Hepsford!"

Then, with another glance toward the door: "Do all you possibly can to hasten matters without exciting her suspicions. You know the financial situation. You realize how much depends on it."

"I shall do my best."

"Then the country is safe."

And he lit a cigar.

X

TWO TEMPERS

THE smile was lukewarm with which Octavia returned Ethan Lovejoy's friendly "good morning" as she entered the Old Hall on the following day. Her own intentions were not amiable. Moreover, her plan of battle had been carefully rehearsed.

Should this American prove to have no patriotism, then her efforts would avail nothing as her main object was to make him angry. And she realized the improbability of a man of his intelligence having any serious love or admiration for so lamentable a country as America, even if that country were his own.

Baseborn arose from a recumbent position in a bar of sunshine and advanced to meet her. He cocked his head to one side, pricked up his ears, and, with his big brown eyes fixed earnestly on her face, wagged his tail in a hearty welcome. The tail thus wagged by Baseborn was a strange affair. Too long for style, too short for nature, it took an unexpected bend—twist or deviation—about the middle of its present length. This aberration of the main line, accentuated by a local growth of parti-colored hair,

seemed to signify a former calamity; as if the tail had been shortened by some hostile force, an earthquake or a stroke of lightning—possibly both.

Ignoring Baseborn, Octavia approached the drawings. Whereupon the architect took a little bunch of Johnny-jump-ups from a tumbler of water that stood on his table. Unfolding a clean handkerchief he wiped the stem of the flowers, then with a ceremonious bow, presented them.

"Will the goddess of flowers, and of sunshine in dark places, accept this offering from an ordinary mortal?"

She took it, and acknowledged the gift with a pleasanter smile than was in her morning's program.

It was then she wavered, for a moment, in her purpose. A slight flush, almost of shame, came into her cheeks, for surely it was ungracious, in return for this gift, to disparage the country of the giver, to ridicule the manners and morals of his compatriots.

When once resolved upon a deed of which we are secretly ashamed, it is disconcerting to have the victim anticipate the blow by an act of kindness. Her hesitation, however, was brief. She braced herself for the attack by recalling his facetious and disparaging comments on her own ancestors, his ridicule of her own people, his exasperating contempt for her own class and its traditions.

After the usual inspection of his work, with the usual display of interest in its progress, she tossed

upon his drawing the little photograph of herself. "Your prophecy was correct. I am ashamed of the manner in which I acquired the picture."

He picked it up and held it toward her. "I also am ashamed of not giving it to you when you asked for it. Please take it."

For an instant she hesitated. Then she took the picture, thanked him briefly, and moved away toward her usual seat in the window. It was evident, even to Baseborn, that in the atmosphere this morning there was a new element—something foreign, mysterious and threatening. The tail stopped wagging. With head at an angle he studied her as if trying to guess the riddle.

Octavia now discovered that to introduce her subject in the natural course of conversation, and without arousing suspicion of her intent, seemed almost impossible. But Fortune, in an unexpected way, came promptly to her aid.

On the seat beside her lay a pocket kodak of peculiar fashion. She took it up and examined it. "What a nice little camera! I never saw one just like it!"

"Yes, it is very convenient. It came from America."

"Was it made in the United States?"

"Yes."

"Impossible."

"Why impossible?" And in mild surprise he looked up from his work.

"Because it is so well made."

"You mean—they never do things well in America?"

"That is what I meant. But even an American might do honest work perhaps if he saw immediate pecuniary profit."

"Are Americans so bad as that?"

"They certainly have achieved that reputation, poor things! Personally I have met few specimens. But I have found them crude, ill bred, self satisfied and hideously commercial. Nobody seems to respect them. But while mistrusted here in Europe they possess, I am told, a value from the money they bring. But of course you know all that as well as I."

Here the lady paused; not for his reply, as she had no intention of allowing him to proclaim his nationality and so spoil the fun. She noticed with pleasure an involuntary contraction of his eyebrows, and a compressing of the lips. But he hesitated before replying, and she admired his self control. She knew how angry she herself would be had a foreigner so spoken of her own people.

Slowly, in a constrained voice, and without looking up from his work, he began:

"As I myself am—"

"Yes, of course you are aware of all that. But while those Yankees are personally offensive, unreliable, tricky, astonishingly smart and without business honor, they do try hard, I understand, poor

things, to make up in extravagance what they lack in good breeding. Their sudden, unmerited wealth, their whole condition, in fact, socially and morally, suggests a stupendous, gilded mushroom."

"Yes, but—"

"Think of living in a land where clever inventions take the place of art, literature and manners! Where they joke at crime, and where wholesale robbery is never punished; where thieving politicians and tricky financiers are held in high respect."

"Just pause one second, if you please. I—"

But she did not pause. After a seemingly careless glance in his direction—for he had straightened up and faced about—she continued serenely, as if his voice had not reached her:

"And you may think it impossible, but Yankee women are even more vulgar than the men; more nervous, with higher, thinner, louder voices, and always—always—always talking. And the wealthiest women gladly sell themselves for any sort of a title."

At last there was a pause. Octavia, at the moment, could think of nothing more. She had—roughly at least—covered the ground. Had he a spark of loyalty or patriotism he must be consumed with anger. But as he made no immediate reply she allowed her eyes to move in his direction. He was at work. The frown had left his brow; the flush had departed from his cheeks. He seemed to have recovered his usual—and exasperating—placidity of mind.

Without looking up he inquired, gently:

"How did you know I was an American?"

Octavia, with a slight frown, turned her head toward the open window, and inquired, indifferently:

"*Are* you an American?"

"No. I am partly Ethiopian, partly Jew, but mostly Chinese and Hottentot."

Gently, also, she replied:

"I might have guessed it from some of the opinions you have expressed. But you are a very clever person."

"Do you really think so?"

"No."

The draughtsman, going on with his work, began to whistle, gently, a slow and dirge-like air. This lasted but a moment. "You must remember," he said, "that even if I do seem clever to *you*—"

"But you do not."

"—it is only by contrast. A dull American might appear to an English person exceedingly bright."

Then, with the obvious purpose of drowning her reply, he whistled louder, beating time upon the table with his triangle. The lady frowned. But, as he kept his eyes upon the drawing she gave up the frown—which was clearly wasted—and leaned back with an air of resignation. Then a silence came, and he said, without looking up, "How do you like my manners?"

"Unusually good—for an American." And in silent disdain she turned her face toward the window.

While in this position she heard him climb up and stand upon his chair. He was humming in the lowest of tones an unfamiliar air; something solemn and slow. Then, in the gentlest of voices he said, from his high perch:

"Of course, American men have not the nimble wit, the ready perception nor the quick sympathy and charm of manner for which the Briton is so justly famous and so universally beloved. Neither has he that indifference to money which is, perhaps, the most obtrusive characteristic in this unselfish island."

Octavia's figure stiffened, but her face was still toward the window.

She heard him say,

"There is, of course, some resemblance between Englishmen and Americans, yet there is a striking difference—as British soldiers and sailors have discovered on sundry occasions."

"Indeed!"

"Did you ever hear of the fight at Lexington, the Yorktown affair or the battle of New Orleans?"

"Never."

Ethan Lovejoy sighed. "Well, I am not surprised. They are events on which the British historian would hardly be apt to linger."

Octavia answered serenely:

"Matters not worth recording, for a serious historian, might be of huge importance to some far away, ridiculous little colony."

"That's a good shot," replied the victim, and he climbed down and went on with his drawing.

"Of course you will admit," he said, "the generally accepted fact that while one American equals only two English soldiers, one Yankee, in a sea fight, is a match for three and one-half English sailors."

At these words Octavia, who was the staunchest of patriots, thrilled with a hot anger. But she replied, quietly:

"It might possibly be in better taste and show a different kind of courage—but un-American perhaps—if you made such speeches to the *men* of this country instead of to the women."

"You are right. I retract and apologize. How can I atone? Allow me to confess that American men are a lying, thieving, cowardly lot."

"I did not say they are cowards."

"You forgot to mention it."

Although his tone was conciliatory, Octavia had the gratification of seeing a distinct effort to maintain a smiling front. This promise of victory encouraged her to remark, in a soothing tone:

"I have no doubt the men have courage—of a certain kind. It is chiefly the women I object to, although their intentions may be good. It is possibly not their own fault, poor things, that they are noisy, pretentious and so depressingly vulgar."

After this speech there was a silence, or rather a stillness—the unnatural stillness before a summer tempest when the atmosphere, overladen with elec-

tricity, precedes the final, climacteric crash. Slowly and calmly, but in a constrained voice, he replied:

"I might repeat a rude remark made by an ill mannered American—for they are all ill mannered you know—"

"How can they be otherwise?"

"—to a tactful Briton who was very considerate of others' feelings—for how can they be otherwise?"

Octavia's cheeks tingled, but she merely drummed with her fingers upon the old stone window sill.

"This Yankee admitted—mind you, he admitted —that there is about as much resemblance between the women of the two countries as between peaches and potatoes."

Octavia straightened up. Her chin rose and she turned her eyes, in hot anger, upon the speaker. For the briefest moment she looked into the familiar grey eyes and she felt—mingling with her indignation—a certain pleasure in the discovery that the owner of those eyes, although he returned her look with a smile, was also angry and was controlling himself with a mighty effort.

Prompted by this knowledge—and by a keen desire to accomplish her purpose—the abasement of his exasperating, almost triumphant serenity—she tossed the Johnny-jump-ups through the open window, saying:

"Do not pick any more of those flowers. The owner of the castle might object."

She read in his eyes that she had succeeded. It was the look that might have come had he been struck in the face. For an instant they regarded each other, he evidently taken by surprise, humiliated, wrathful, but struggling to conceal his feelings. His lips tightened, but he made no immediate reply. Raising a hand under his blouse he took from some inner pocket a shilling; and he tossed it out the window through which his flowers had just departed.

"That," he said, "is your gift to me. It should follow mine to you."

This action had no meaning to Octavia. Surprised, but too disdainful to ask an explanation, she moved haughtily toward the door.

"You paid me," he added, "the regular fare the other day for rowing you across the ferry, and you gave me an extra sixpence for myself. That was the shilling."

She stopped, turned about and, for a short moment, regarded him with a new expression. When she spoke it was in a lower tone, and with her chin again in the air.

"Then you knew—"

"Yes. I knew. And I have known all along that you are not the gardener's daughter."

This reply—the unexpected knowledge that she was the deceived and he the deceiver—kindled in Octavia a more serious indignation. She was, for the moment, the spoiled child who must not be

thwarted or opposed. With the sense of defeat, of outraged pride, with the shame of being so easily tricked, came mortification at the undignified rôle she had been playing in this man's eyes. All the pride in her nature, and there was more than enough, suddenly revolted. She was writhing inwardly under an exaggerated sense of degradation, as if the Drumworth honor and her own dignity in these frequent, unchaperoned visits had been dragged in the mire. With swift memories of these violations of propriety came the unbearable consciousness of having cheapened herself.

She bit her lip. The color rushed to her face—a flush of shame and vexation. And the shame and vexation were fine food for anger. All extenuating details were forgotten—or ignored. She obeyed a reprehensible but very human desire to put her adversary in the wrong and herself in the right.

Surveying him with flashing eyes, and showing in tone and manner all the frigidity she could muster, she said, in uneven tones:

"And your very free comments on my ancestors, my family and myself have been deliberate, intentional, and with the fullest knowledge of whom you were insulting."

"Insulting!"

Paying no attention to his protesting word she merely murmured, as she turned haughtily away:

"My congratulations."

Then down the hall and out through the doorway she passed, head erect and without haste.

Octavia's anger, although alive and hot, was the passing anger of a maiden unaccustomed to contradiction, or to defeat in any form. It was the short lived, half enjoyable anger easily dispelled by a word of apology or by a sense of triumph. But when, after descending the steps from the Old Hall, she entered the ancient garden—the Garden of the Sleeping Beauty—there came a sound to her ears that transformed this superficial anger into something deeper and more lasting. Through the window, at whose open casement she had been sitting a moment ago, came the voice of the draughtsman as she had heard it on the morning when it first led to their acquaintance. He was humming, just loud enough to be heard, the march in "Aïda," poorly rendered, but now, under present conditions, an impertinent, uncalled for manifestation of indifference, as if the episode was finished—the incident closed: their brief acquaintance already forgotten. And this, a thoughtless note of victory—or congratulation—over its happy ending!

In this heartless humming there was something so insulting, so humiliating to Octavia's dignity, so belittling to all sense of her own importance, that her spirit flamed with a deeper indignation.

If it be true that

> Hell has no fury like a woman scorned,

then Octavia's state of mind needs no describing. Again the hot blood rushed to her face, then left it, leaving her whiter than before. Never in her short life, as the adored and only child of an exalted house, had she felt so humbled, so blind and dumb with mortification and anger—as from a blow in her patrician face.

And from this draughtsman, this unknown man whose acquaintance she had courted! And she, a Drumworth, had made the advances!

For an instant she closed her eyes and literally choked with shame. As she trod the cloistered arches she saw nothing. Through her own garden and the length of the great terrace she moved with dry, bright eyes and quickened breath, but seeing neither sky nor trees nor flowers. Into her cheeks the color came and went—and came, and went again.

She forgot, in her anger, that men in misery have sung to lighten sorrow.

At the door of the castle she was met by Auntie George, in a state of nervous excitement. This also was unobserved by the niece.

"O, Octavia! I was just going to send for you. The King is coming! He stops for lunch on his way to town."

The next instant Auntie George, with wide open eyes and parted lips, took a backward step as she received Octavia's reply:

"I don't care a button for the King!"

And Auntie George did not fully recover herself before Octavia had flown up the grand staircase, rushed into her own chamber and slammed the door with a resounding bang.

XI

A CHANGE OF MIND

DURING the twenty years of Lady Octavia's life her relations with other people had seldom existed on a purely democratic basis—on personal merit without prejudice or favor.

Indulged from infancy in every wish, adored by her family, treated as a divinity by humbler habitants of the castle and the village, eagerly sought by youths of her own class, it was small wonder that the give-and-take speech of Ethan Lovejoy should come to her as a shock. It seemed almost unbelievable. But her subsequent reflections brought more of pained surprise than of serious anger. Her own good sense was now telling her that success in the rôle of a gardener's daughter demanded, at moments, sudden mental readjustments for which she was not prepared by any past experience. Nevertheless, out of respect to her birth and quality, to the ordinary conventionalities of life and to her dignity as a woman she resolved to make no further visits to this draughtsman. Already she had gone too far.

As usual, however, she visited her garden the next morning, and, as usual, began to work therein. The work was interesting, for she loved her flowers. But the care of flowers, just now, was not absorbing. Possibly horticulture, as a regular pursuit, was less diverting than architecture. She recognized, of course, that this want of interest was due to her own state of mind. Certainly she was restless. Her labors in the garden were brief. Returning to the castle she busied herself with other matters. And she found, whatever the occupation, that the amazingly impertinent words of the draughtsman came persistently to her mind, and above all other words, "peaches and potatoes." But more unbearable than any words was the recollection—which she tried in vain to put behind her—of his song of indifference—or relief—after she had left him. With every recollection of it came a flush of anger. And the recollections were frequent.

She fully realized how great would be her fall in Auntie George's esteem should that rigorous lady ever learn of this affair. And Octavia recalled this aunt's unspeakable contempt for a relative of theirs who had accepted the attentions—she had not married, but merely accepted the attentions—of a man of obscure family. His was some mortifying occupation, not unlike, perhaps, that of an architect. He was a good man, but in no way related or connected with any family of position. So far as concerned Auntie George his individual character—under such

conditions—mattered little. He might be an imbecile or the wisest of his race. Thug, thief or saint, his proper place was in a lower world. Such "persons" bore the same relation to "nice people" as crawling creatures of the mud to birds of paradise in the clean air above. And Octavia turned hot and cold when she recalled the manner in which the Duchess of Linsmere had once commented on the clandestine meetings of two otherwise reputable persons.

"Clandestine meetings!"

Yes, surely her own meetings with this draughtsman were "clandestine." "Clandestine" was evidently equivalent in such affairs to vicious, immoral and compromising. And what would her father think of these clandestine meetings with an utter stranger? She was astounded, now, at her own want of pride. Inexpressible was her gratitude that this disgraceful episode was her own secret, and a thing of the past.

"Clandestine!"

And again she shuddered at the word.

Then, while in this valley of shame and repentance, she made a splendid effort to believe the worst of the American. And she succeeded—partially.

So severe was her self criticism, so profound her repentance and so frequent her moments of gloomy meditation, that at lunch Auntie George inquired, with some anxiety, if she had a headache. No, she had no headache; she felt perfectly well; a little dull

perhaps, and needing exercise. She would walk to the village in the afternoon.

The walk along the river's bank from Drumworth Castle to the village was a pleasant little journey. Octavia, that afternoon, invented among other things an errand at the library. This library, a picturesque affair of Tudor design, had been given by her great-grandfather to the townspeople.

The librarian, a tall, sharp-faced spinster of complacent manners, was the sole relic of a once worshipful family; for which reason she had been selected by Lady Georgiana. Possessing neither tact, memory, administrative ability nor business sense, she was, of course, not just the person for the place. But to Lady Georgiana education and literature were frothy trifles compared with noble birth. However, certain compensations existed, as the lady, in turn, sincerely believed the Drumworth family to be of divine origin.

While Octavia and this futile librarian were discussing the purchase of certain books, they heard an unwonted commotion in the usually peaceful street. As the commotion rapidly increased they moved to the window. There they understood, at once, the meaning of the gathering crowd and the excited voices.

The library stood in the very center of the village where the main street widened out into a kind of open square, with an ancient stone watering trough

in the center. Directly opposite the library, on the opposite side of this little square, stood an old, four storied structure. From its lower windows, at the present moment, came clouds of smoke, not large in volume, but lurid and ominous. Octavia hastened from the room and stood upon the library steps, the complacent librarian at her side. From these steps, a few feet above the level of the sidewalk, she commanded a perfect view of the scene that followed. And it was a scene she was not to forget. Certain villagers, male and female, who had already clustered about the doorway, deferentially saluted her, and moved down to the lower step. The flames had already gained dangerous headway before the primitive fire extinguisher of the village could arrive. The apothecary and haberdasher who occupied the two shops on the lower floor were hastily removing their most valued articles. Lodgers in the upper floors, realizing their peril, were either fleeing or had already fled, with such property as could be saved.

The absence of the chief of the unprofessional fire brigade—he being away in Taunton for the day—left his well meaning but undisciplined associates with no directing head. The result was a scene of uncertainty and confusion in front of the burning building. Many voices were heard, and with much advice; but there was no concerted action. The stream of water from the feverish engine was directed with nervous haste first in one

place, then another, but with little discouragement to the flames. Eager helpers pushed in among the firemen. Those nominally in authority tried vainly to bring order out of this increasing chaos.

On one side of the burning building was a garden; on the other, with only a narrow alley between, stood the village inn. Should the inn take fire several other structures, close beside and around it, would surely go. So rapidly and so easily were the flames devouring the interior of the building now ablaze—all the more combustible from age—that the inn seemed doomed. Octavia, in silent distress, stood watching this scene of vain activity. She loved her village, and above all its ancient buildings. This sudden calamity, this threatened destruction of so much that she had known from childhood, filled her with acutest sorrow. And with this sorrow came a sense of anger with the incompetence of those persons in control. But as a woman, she could only stand with other women, in helpless terror, and look on.

While thus absorbed, deaf to the voices about—and to the comments of the elderly spinster at her side—she noticed, casually, a tall figure in grey clothes approach a group of agitated firemen, hold their attention by his words, point upward to the flames now eating through the roof, then to the upper story of the inn, alongside. She also noticed, a moment later, that the men were following his suggestions. Moreover, she saw the deputy in

charge—the hardware merchant of the village—turn to this stranger for further counsel. Looking more carefully at this man in grey she recognized her surreptitious acquaintance of the baronial hall, —the architect, Ethan Lovejoy.

And Octavia realized—together with many others among the spectators—that as she watched him, hope revived. Calmly and without apparent haste, and with no undue assumption of authority, he moved here and there, directing, among other things, the stream of water away from the doomed building to the roof and walls of the threatened inn. The two inadequate ladders he placed in better positions. A few men he detailed to keep back the crowd—all quietly done, and with the easy command which, to certain persons, comes naturally in crises. He was acting, efficiently, as head of the fire department and as chief of police. His suggestions were gladly received and promptly executed. Even the crowd of spectators had become quieter. They had fallen back, leaving a larger space for the firemen. And they spoke in lower voices.

From this quieter mass of people—intently watching a man astride the ridge pole of the inn throwing water upon its roof—suddenly a cry went up, sharp, piercing, in a child's voice.

"Oh! Sally! Oh! Oh!"

It was a startling cry. To some it was ludicrous; and they laughed. But a second later there fell

upon the crowd a silence. Eyes, moving from the inn to the burning building, beheld a woman at one of the windows of the highest floor, beckoning for help. She leaned far out the window to escape the smoke and heat behind. A murmur, a gasp of horror when a name was spoken—hardly more than a whisper—swept over the crowd, as a ripple on a lake.

"Sally Pindar!"

And again came the shrill voice of the child, a wild cry of grief, of anger and protest—a despairing call for help. And this boy of ten ran out from the crowd to the man in grey, and pulled fiercely at his sleeve.

"That's my sister! Save her! Oh! Save her quick!"

Octavia saw Ethan Lovejoy look down into the upturned face, then up toward the victim in the fated building. Gently he shook off the boy. Then with a few strides of his long legs he reached one of the ladders resting against the inn. With swift directions to other men, and with his own hands, he spliced the ladders together—making one long one out of the two. Quickly placed in position this long ladder came to Sally Pindar's window, easily within her reach. And Sally Pindar, faint from fright and shock, clutched it with quivering fingers. But her strength was gone. She lacked the physical power to climb out upon it. After an hysterical effort she collapsed, and lay unconscious across the window

sill. Octavia uttered a wail of horror; of unutterable, helpless pity. For it seemed the will of God that this poor girl—whom she had known from childhood—should sink into the raging furnace behind her.

About to turn away from a tragedy she had not the heart to witness, she saw Ethan Lovejoy throw off his coat and waistcoat, and grip the ladder with both hands. Either to test its strength or to adjust it more firmly in position, he shook it. For it seemed an uncertain affair, even under favorable conditions, these two ladders tied hastily together.

Then he started up. So silent was the crowd that no sound was heard except the roar and crackling of the flames. And as he climbed on and up, through smoke and a shower of sparks, Octavia noticed in the sunlight—as we are impressed by trivial things at tragic moments—the striking whiteness of his shirt. And so acutely sensitive were her nerves with the promised rescue of Sally Pindar, that she could have laughed aloud.

When Ethan Lovejoy, in his ascent, reached that point where the two ladders were spliced together they sagged and yielded in an ominous way. But on and up he climbed. At times he was almost hidden from view, for this ladder, to reach the dormer above, was of necessity placed directly in front of the lower windows. And through these windows, where glass was already broken, smoke poured in fitful clouds, dense, somber, lit up at

times by tongues of flame. But he reached the top. There, with his feet upon the second rung he straightened up, slowly, not to lose his balance, and took a firm grip on the old stone cornice. This cornice, fortunately, projected but a few inches from the wall. Bending far over, with his weight upon the cornice, he put an arm about the fainting woman and slowly lifted her from the window. And it was clearly a feat that required not only the coolest head but extraordinary physical strength. Then it was that Octavia held her breath. And on the crowd beneath lay a deathlike silence. For it seemed impossible that a man with such a weight could balance himself, and cling close enough to the wall to regain his hold upon the ladder. But this man did it. And as he did it, slowly, with exceeding caution, but absolutely without fear, exclamations, involuntary and half suppressed, went up from below.

Calmly with his burden he began the descent. Again the quaking ladders bent and swayed, far more than when bearing but a single person. More, and yet more they yielded as he approached that portion where the two were joined. But on and downward he continued. Octavia wondered if he knew his peril. And she realized that whether he did or did not it now could make no difference. It was his only course.

As his foot came cautiously, but with his whole weight, upon one of the lower rungs of the upper

ladder the dreaded thing occurred. The ladder gave way beneath him. Down and in it bent, toward the building, first slowly, then with a sudden movement. Ethan Lovejoy with his burden went crashing against the window, to what seemed an awful death. With a cry of horror from the gazing crowd came a sound of shivering glass. And out through the broken casement poured sheets of pent up flame.

On the library steps, near Octavia, a woman fainted.

Octavia herself, with a cry of terror, clutched the arm of the librarian beside her. With the other hand she covered her eyes.

Cries of astonishment caused her to raise her head. As a cloud of smoke cleared away, for an instant, she saw Ethan Lovejoy hanging with one arm over the sill of the window, his toes just reaching the projecting cap of the window below. And he was not alone. His other arm still held, securely, the fainting woman. From the crowd below came a sound—a great gasp—of awe, of amazement—an involuntary cheer. From Octavia came a whispered prayer. A lump was in her throat. Verily, this man was faithful to his trust!

As he maintained himself thus, by one arm, with scarcely a bearing for the tips of his toes, a floor within the window fell, and new sheets of flame shot out and up. Enveloped in smoke and sparks, still he hung. And still he held the woman. But no human lungs could long survive such an atmos-

phere. Men below, meantime, had placed one of the shorter ladders against the wall. And Ethan Lovejoy, his brain unclouded, his nerves unshaken, his strength unfailing, descended slowly, with Sally Pindar in his arms, again to earth.

Waiting hands took the unconscious figure from his arms. He himself stood for an instant near the foot of the ladder, pressing his hands against his eyes. Two men led him farther from the burning walls. A moment later, however, he was moving about, directing the firemen as if nothing of importance had occurred. Octavia found relief for overstrung nerves in listening to the comments of the more placid librarian beside her. And she found relief, to her own amazement, in commenting upon Ethan Lovejoy's shirt, whose whiteness had been so conspicuous as he ascended the ladder; now, alas! grimy and disreputable, one sleeve hanging in rags from the shoulder.

Less than an hour later, when the safety of the inn had been assured, Octavia was walking homeward. Although with head erect and with the light step of youth, there had come in her eyes a more serious, almost solemn expression. She acknowledged, in an absent manner, the deferential salutations of the various persons she encountered.

Of heroic deeds she had often read. In history and in fiction she had found inspiring records. Many tales were told wherein heroes had offered their lives for others; in battle and in peace; on water

and on land. These things had moved her, and she had regretted, in a girlish way, that she was not a man. But those heroes, however splendid, were impersonal figures. They were names.

Today, however, the man was real and her own eyes had seen the deed. She had seen him, in the ordinary light of an English day, freely and with no thought of himself, offer his life to save a most obscure and unimportant woman. With his physical strength he had shown a courage that had filled her with a kind of awe. This feeling grew, the more she thought of it. For today there had been no music for incentive; no brilliant audience, and no applause. But in case of failure there was mutilation, or death; and no reward in case of victory. He had looked for no reward. His recompense was within himself; a recompense so immeasurably finer and higher than all human applause, that as Octavia walked homeward along the river's bank, there was moisture in her eyes.

And in her soul there was a new light.

"VERILY, THIS MAN WAS FAITHFUL TO HIS TRUST—"

XII

IN THE OLD GARDEN

IN the darkness of Octavia's chamber, that night, the courage of her own convictions, as she lay awake, grew stronger with the silent hours.

Also, some of her previous opinions were modified. Her more youthful heroes became victims to a different standard. With the newer heroes of her imagination there was less of the military—fewer uniforms and music; less shouting and powder. And ever prominent in these scenes moved the figure of Ethan Lovejoy, calm, silent and self-forgetting—and of surprising strength. The more she reflected upon the scene at the fire the more deeply she regretted the contemptible quarrel of the morning. And more ashamed of it she became. It was she who began it; she who had deliberately, in cold blood, with premeditated malice, goaded the unwilling victim to the fray. What man with a spark of patriotism could have remained silent in face of her revilings? He could have but one opinion of her behavior; of her insulting, malicious words. Looking back upon the conflict, she appreciated, now, his self control beneath her preliminary taunts; his

obvious struggle to refrain from retaliation. Nevertheless, despite all efforts, she could not forget the remark about peaches and potatoes. Although unable to forget it she found, since the rescue of Sally Pindar, that it was easily forgiven. Such a rescue was ample atonement for even a blacker crime than defending his own country. It should, in her opinion, reinstate the vilest sinner. More difficult to forgive was his deceit and his lack of consideration in treating her as a gardener's daughter. She was fair enough to admit, however, that her own deceit in assuming the rôle was partial justification for the offense.

So, when she started the next morning—ostensibly for her own garden—in the gingham apron with scissors and flower basket, there was not only forgiveness in her heart but some anxiety as to his opinion of herself. She was ready to make fullest apologies for her words of yesterday.

From the old archway Octavia stepped into the garden, then halted and stood in silence. The Garden of the Sleeping Beauty this morning truly deserved its name. Although alive, joyous and all aquiver in the May sunshine, it seemed the partial awakening of forgotten things, of drowsy memories long asleep., The birds that twittered about the untrimmed box and overgrown, shapeless yew trees seemed impertinent intruders. Neglected flowers gave spots of color here and there, still holding their heads above the ever crowding weeds. And the pink

roses against the grey walls of the Old Hall opened their petals to the morning sun more slowly than other roses—still dreaming, perhaps.

Along the central path, amid this wild luxuriance of neglect, strode Ethan Lovejoy, one hand behind him, the other against his chest. To and fro he marched, as far as the basin of the silent fountain, then back to the statue of the dancing cupid, his eyes to the ground, unaware of Octavia's presence. When he turned about and walked away the great initials E. L. stood out with startling clearness upon the ridiculous blouse, now, in the bright sunlight, more absurd than ever. But there was nothing comic or humorous in the man himself. He was the moving image of dejection. He wore no hat. He was indifferent to the glare of any sun—unconscious of the world about him.

Octavia stood silent until he again approached the dancing statue.

"Good morning."

He stopped and raised his head. All fears regarding his resentment at her slurs upon his country and its people were at once dispelled. Into his face, after the briefest instant of surprise, came a look of pleasure; of boyish delight. With a joyful exclamation—as he read the look in her own face—he advanced with a hand outstretched.

"Oh, good, good! You have come!"

With a joy so real and so unrestrained that it became contagious, he grasped the hand she involun-

tarily held forth. This joy, sincere and uncontrolled, with which he looked into her eyes, still holding her hand, caused Octavia to feel, for a moment, that never in her life had any one been so glad to see her. It brought the color to her cheeks.

Very young when her mother died, Octavia had missed much of that affection so precious to every human being. Her father, although a loving parent, was not demonstrative. And while Auntie George was dutifully affectionate—sufficient for all practical purposes—she did not believe in "petting" children. Moreover, as Octavia belonged to a people who instinctively repress all joy dispensing emotions —and to a class who consider such repression "good form"— her share of love expressed was less than she herself had realized. So, like an unexpected sunbeam in some long shaded corner of her own castle came to Octavia this hearty greeting, this unqualified joy at her presence, and in her forgiveness. Gently withdrawing her hand she murmured something about herself being the offender.

"Never, never!" he exclaimed. "You are an angel of rescue, straight from heaven. Why, I had no hope of being forgiven."

And as she looked into his grey eyes, always mysteriously familiar—as if friends of childhood—she sought again, but vainly, as usual, for aid from her own memory. And as usual in this connection, her own memory seemed wilfully and maliciously to desert her when on the very edge of enlightenment.

As he took a backward step, and stood regarding her, she noticed that his right hand was bandaged.

"You have hurt your hand."

"Merely physical. Nothing compared with my spiritual damage." Then, with a smile, "If you will promise not to laugh or despise me in any way I will tell you something."

"That is asking a great deal. However, I promise."

"Well, I have not slept a wink since that woeful interview yesterday morning."

"Then you certainly took it seriously. But how did you hurt your hand?"

"Burned a little. Nothing serious. Merely overdone on one side."

"How?"

"At a fire yesterday in the village. Didn't you know that the old building opposite the library was a thing of the past?"

Now Octavia wished to hear of the exploit from his own lips; a partly mischievous curiosity as to what extent—being an American—he would make himself appear to the best advantage. So, with a slight frown of impatience, she demanded:

"Yes, yes. I know that; but how, in what way did you burn your hand?"

"By holding it too long against a hot window-sill."

"Why did you do it?"

"My other hand was busy, and if I had let go I

should have fallen to the ground, twenty or thirty feet. And that would have been foolisher yet."

"Then your other hand is not hurt?"

"Oh, no! that hand was having a very comfortable time."

"Holding Sally Pindar."

He raised his eyebrows. "So you heard about our—our unconventional goings on?"

"I was there. I saw it all."

"I am thankful I did not see *you*."

"Am I so terrifying?"

"You were yesterday. I was so ashamed of that scene in the morning I might have fled if I had seen you, and let Miss Pindar and the whole town burn."

"Please be serious."

"I am. Is not a man serious when his remorse is so bitter that he promenades all night in front of a castle?"

"Absurd!"

"But it is true."

Now, Octavia was enjoying another mild surprise. She had anticipated, their relative positions being acknowledged, a perceptible change in his attitude. Not the customary deference, perhaps, which in this unique acquaintance she neither expected nor desired, but some recognition, however faint, of the consideration shown by ordinary people, such as draughtsmen, to the first ladies of the land. It was clear, however, that this American was not embarrassed by class distinctions. His democ-

racy was sincere. His present manner toward her showed no change. There was, as usual, the clearest manifestation of a very real—almost boyish—pleasure in her company. A more respectful, intelligent and thoroughly enjoyable appreciation of her society she could not expect upon this earth. And the knowledge that it was inspired by herself alone came almost as a new experience. This knowledge afforded her a gratification—a quality of happiness—which, although discreetly veiled, was no less real than his own.

For a moment she looked away, beyond the ivy covered balustrade of the old garden across the fields to the distant village. "I did not realize at the time how dreadfully, unbearably hot that window sill must have been."

"No reason why you should. Let's think of something cooler. The treatment I deserve, for instance. As for my brutal speech of yesterday regarding—"

"If you had dropped Sally Pindar," she interrupted, "you could have used both hands and not burnt this one."

"Drop Sally Pindar! Had I done that I should never again have faced you, or anybody else. Heavens! I am bad enough now! Really, truly, seriously, I cannot tell you how grateful, how happy I am that you have forgiven that business of yesterday morning."

He spoke earnestly. As they looked into each

other's eyes she smiled. "To tell you the truth," she said, "although the chief offender I was quite angry and unforgiving until I saw you at that burning building. It was splendid; the bravest deed I ever saw—or ever shall see, probably. You are a real hero, Mr. Lovejoy. And whatever you may do, however bad you are hereafter, that shall not be forgotten."

"Those are pleasant words to hear, but—but I er—you are putting me on too high a pedestal. The rôle of a hero is hard to maintain. We men are fearfully human, you know."

"You are up there now, and must not come down until I tell you. When you had climbed to the middle of that ladder, and it threatened to give way, did you believe it would bear the double weight of you and Sally Pindar?"

Partially turning his face away, he studied her from the corners of his eyes. And in doing so he seemed—in his shapeless blouse—an overgrown schoolboy, caught in an evil deed, inventing some convincing falsehood to clear himself. After a moment's hesitation he asked:

"What is the Glory of the Morning driving at?"

"Answer the question."

"Why do you ask?"

"Answer the question."

"Well, in the first place I enjoy climbing ladders; most boys do. Secondly, I am fond of Miss Pindar. Thirdly, she has been very kind to me. I told

her that if I could ever be of service to her, in any way whatever, she might count on me."

Octavia drew a long breath, looked away over the distant meadows, but made no comment. Turning into one of the neglected paths of the garden she moved slowly along between the high rows of untrimmed box, he close behind. And she wondered, incidentally, in what manner Sally Pindar had been kind to him.

"I have noticed," he said, as they walked along, "that when women place us on pedestals our fall is painful. I would much prefer to begin now, if I may, and climb down by easy stages. It will be far better for me in the end."

For reply she merely smiled, and shook her head.

"Then for my own protection," he added, "and for a more leisurely descent, allow me to state that the American police are waiting for me. A lifelong friend trusted me with his money and I ran away with it. I also took his wife."

The lady's face was turned away, toward the meadows to the south, so the effect of these remarks was not visible.

"Moreover, being a Yankee, I chew tobacco, smoke bad cigars in church and always eat with my knife."

Still receiving no reply from the averted face, he continued: "I ought also to tell you that I have spent a long term in prison—being an anarchist—for trying to blow up Windsor Castle and the House of Lords."

If a smile had been on her face it was repressed. With a slight frown she turned and looked up at him. "And I am learning that a man can shine at fires and yet be disappointing in his conversation. Do you take nothing seriously? Do Americans joke about everything?"

"Everything jokeable. Why not?"

"I see I must take you down from the pedestal. You are not sufficiently serious minded for a real hero. You are too fond of nonsense."

"Thanks. Now I feel safer. You may not know —being a woman—that good nonsense purifies the mind, fortifies philosophy and keeps the spirit young."

"I confess I have often suspected it."

"You know a sensible man can be very silly at times if he really puts his mind on it."

"So I see."

They had now reached the balustrade that enclosed the two open sides of the garden, the other two sides, north and west, being enclosed by the high gray walls of the castle. Bending forward, Octavia leaned upon this old stone balustrade, looking down upon the fields below. Ethan Lovejoy followed her example. Together they surveyed the sunny landscape. And the landscape, like all else this June morning, was entrancing. Shoulder to shoulder, in silence, they breathed that celestial air that warms the heart and awakens feelings that are more than friendly.

XIII

AMONG THE ROSES

AFTER a long silence—a somewhat intimate silence—they spoke in lower tones. Possibly the atmosphere of the ancient garden may have worked its charm. Whatever the cause, both Ethan Lovejoy and Lady Octavia were in the mood for further knowledge of each other. And this knowledge was so easily acquired! Not so much from bald statements of fact as from a lively but unuttered personal interest. For the conversation was, ostensibly on impersonal subjects: life, death and astronomy; literature, bees, cooking, psychic phenomena, England and America; Rome, exercise, architecture and various human things, but with illustrative anecdotes from the speakers' own lives. The two adventurers, in this voyage of discovery, drifted rapidly together.

Ethan Lovejoy learned, among other things, that this girl's feeling for the old castle was a deep and serious affection. Every room and passage, every tower and court, every vine and flower upon its historic walls was a part of her life. He also discovered that beneath the medievally aristocratic

ideas of which he now believed her the irresponsible victim, her nature was simple and direct; and her instincts, unsuspected by herself, were surprisingly democratic. Her exalted ideas of the glories of the house of Drumworth, and of the sanctity of other noble families, were to him fantastic; incomprehensible almost in a woman otherwise so reasonable and well poised. But these ideas were easily explained by certain tales he had heard in the village of her early education. In this educational diet, as administered by a watchful aunt, Burke's Peerage had been the flavoring substance.

For a long time they talked, this morning, both leaning forward upon the stone balustrade. At last, after a silent study of her folded hands he said:

"Those gloves of yours really look as if you worked in a garden."

"I do. Every morning I work an hour or two. The last few days, however, I have been wasting time in your vicinity. I must reform." And she straightened up, and took her basket.

"Oh no! Please don't reform! These visits have been my inspiration. You have duties as the patron saint of architecture. If you desert me now the restorations of the castle will be a failure."

She smiled and gently shook her head, then moved away. he following, along the narrow path between overgrown shrubs and flowers. In her quaint garden hat and blue gingham apron, with her

girlish figure, her sloping shoulders and erect carriage, she reminded him of the women in certain old prints of an earlier generation. While absorbed in a profound study of the back of her head and neck, and the many tints in her warm brown, sunlit hair, she suddenly stopped with a half suppressed exclamation. An arm was caught and held by the thorns of a projecting rose bush. And on the arm, held involuntarily toward him, he saw, along the white, smooth flesh between the old glove and the sleeve, a scratch. It was a little scratch, neither long nor wide, nor deep enough to bleed.

"Can you loosen the sleeve?" she asked.

But he, before loosening the sleeve, placed his bandaged hand beneath her wrist for support, then picked with the good hand a petal from one of the white roses of the offending bush. This petal he laid tenderly upon the small red line, pressing gently with his fingers as if upon a mortal wound.

"A cruel gash!" he murmured. "But doesn't that rose leaf feel nice and cool? It is the court plaster fairies use, and it cures everything.

With one of her characteristic movements when either displeased or embarrassed, she raised her chin and regarded him with lowered eyelids. But as she encountered his own eyes—always unaccountably familiar—a faint smile moved the sensitive lips. Quickly he loosened the restraining thorns, and she started on. At the end of the path near the wall of the castle, she halted and studied a

rose vine that was clambering, high above their heads, around the great window of the Baronial Hall—the window in which she had been wasting time.

"*There* is a rose that might truly sympathize with cruel gashes. It was planted by Anne Boleyn —with her own hands."

"By Anne Boleyn!" And in silence, obviously impressed, he regarded the vine.

"On one of her visits at Drumworth, in June, 1530, she planted this rose, about a year before her marriage. We have an account of it, written at the time in an old diary, kept by one of the family."

"By one of *your* family?"

Octavia nodded. "A great aunt of mine, in looking over a journal kept by an ancestor who was a cousin of Anne Boleyn, came across the reference to planting the rose, telling just where it was placed and describing the kind of rose. It came from France."

For a moment or two both stood in silence, gazing up at the vine. It had twined itself around an old balcony, then along projecting moldings and edges of the great window.

"All the roses, unfortunately, are out of reach," and Octavia sighed. "They are quite unusual, and their perfume is exquisite."

"Nothing you desire should be out of reach."

In front of them, against the wall, stood an old seat with a high arm at each end, all cut in stone.

Stepping first upon the seat, then upon one of the ends, he climbed higher yet, seeking a foothold upon projecting moldings. At last, he reached slowly up until his hand—the uninjured hand—grasped one of the lower branches. This he pulled cautiously toward him, and secured a rose. It was a hazardous deed, Octavia watching in anxious silence. Returning to earth he placed the flower in her hand. She thanked him, held it to her nostrils and closed her eyes.

"'Tis a faint little perfume," she murmured; "but very sweet"; then returned it to him.

He also inhaled its fragrance. "Yes; just a memory of its youth."

He studied it with a sort of reverence. "Its very tints are tragic, aren't they? The crimson heart, then fading pink to its whiter edges. It has not forgotten, I think, the girl who planted it."

And as he placed it again in her hand Octavia looked up at him with a grateful smile. "That is just what *I* think! That is just how I have always felt about these pale, sad roses; as if pity for that unhappy woman had entered their own pure souls."

She moved slowly past him and seated herself upon the old stone bench. This bench stood back a few inches in a sort of niche, or arched recess, in the outer masonry of the old hall. As the seat was just about long enough for two people, rather close together, he asked:

"May I also sit—without crowding?"

"Yes; being a hero."

He leaned back and closed his eyes. "My Mumsey used to tell me, when I was a little boy, that all the flowers and good animals had souls and there was a place for them in heaven: but that bad people had no souls and were far inferior to well behaved animals."

"And you believed it?"

"Yes indeed! And I still believe it. There would be no charm for me in any heaven if certain dogs I have known were not admitted; where partially reformed thieves and drunkards were substitutes for singing birds and flowers."

To this conception of a hereafter no reply was made. The lady seemed absorbed in a reverie over the rose in her hand. Without lifting her eyes she asked: "Who is the 'Mumsey' you speak of—a nurse?"

"My mother. I wish you could meet her; but she is in America. You would like her. She is as short as I am tall. She has the secret of perpetual youth. She is perfect; just perfect. Not a fault. I am the worst thing she ever did."

"And I suppose she thinks *you* are perfect."

"No. She is too wise for that."

Running a hand inside his blouse he drew forth a letter from a waistcoat pocket. "By the way, speaking of Mumsey, I heard from her this morning and there is a mystery. Perhaps you can solve the riddle."

In the gentlest of tones, without looking up, Octavia asked: "Can the potato interpret the peach?"

Slowly he shook his head. "So you did not tell the truth when you said you had forgiven that remark." And he folded the letter and replaced it in his pocket.

As he did so she extended a protesting hand. "I am ashamed of myself for recalling it; and I did tell the truth. Please read the letter."

As he looked into her face, with its look of half-serious appeal, he could have forgiven anything. But he frowned, looked away, and shook his head. "No, your vengeance is revolting. In my book on the British Isles I shall say that you, like all other English women, never forgive an injury and are bitterly vindictive."

"Oh no, I am not!" she laughed. "Really I am not. Go on with the letter."

Still he frowned, solemnly shook his head and looked over the garden.

"Remember," she went on, "you are not perfect yourself. Your own mother knows it."

"She is prejudiced. However, being an American, I will set an example of humility and grace;" and he drew forth the letter. "This is the riddle." Then reading from the paper in his hand:

"So that statue of Pandora you mention is still in the old hall. And she still holds the casket, I suppose, as if there might be something in it for you. Tell me if the old stone bench with the inscription is still in the little garden alongside."

"That seems very natural," said Octavia. "I see no riddle in it. She refers to that statue in a corner by the great chimney. But why is it remarkable that she should mention it?"

"How could she know it was Pandora?"

"Visitors are often shown over the castle, and she might have been told it was Pandora."

"Yes, but I never mentioned Pandora in my letter. I did not know of its existence until she spoke of it. And she has never seen Drumworth Castle. Listen to this," and he turned back the page and read:

"Drumworth is a famous castle and must be interesting to visit. It is one of the grandest in all England."

Octavia reflected a moment. "Your mother is not frank with you."

"You mean she *has* been here?"

"It seems to me she meant to give you the impression of not having been here and without telling an untruth. She does not really say she was never here."

Ethan frowned, and again studied the letter. "I believe you are right. And that was very clever of Mumsey. But what possible object could she have in deceiving me?"

"No special purpose perhaps," Octavia answered with a smile, "except that men being so dull it is often a pleasure to deceive them."

But Ethan Lovejoy was thoughtful. "It is not like Mumsey."

"The writer of that letter," said Octavia, "is certainly familiar with our Pandora. There is no doubt of that."

"None whatever." He folded the letter and replaced it in his pocket.

Observing his still serious face she inquired:

"You are not angry because I suggested a doubt of her sincerity?"

"Angry? Never! I can say to you in truth, as you have said to me in jest: 'Whatever you may do, now or hereafter, you are forgiven in advance.'"

Then, for a time both sat in silence. In the June sunshine the old garden, the flowers and shrubs, the sky, all things—even the old gray stones of the castle—seemed warm and living. Gently through the old yew trees and the box breathed the soft air from the south, scarcely moving the flowers upon their stems—a soothing zephyr, blending with the hum of bees and with the perfume of roses.

"It is really very surprising," and Ethan's voice was dreamy, "my unaccountable feeling that the present moment is a repetition of some previous experience. Did you ever have it?"

"Yes, more than once."

"I am having it now," he murmured. "I could easily believe that you and I have sat together on this bench in years gone by." He spoke seriously

—with a certain solemnity—and as she turned toward him she saw he had placed the bandaged hand across his eyes.

"Perhaps," she suggested, "you have been here other years, and with other gardeners' daughters."

"No such luck! Until five days ago I never was in this part of England. It may strike you as very silly," he said, removing his hand, his eyes wandering slowly over the scene about them, "but the feeling is so strong, the sensation so very real, that I surely must have dreamed it, imagined it or been through it in some form—or fancy."

Octavia made no reply. She was trying to remember an explanation she had once read of this not uncommon and gently disturbing delusion, when he continued:

"I believe the wise men account for it as some subconscious action of the brain that bears no relation to actual events. But that is not quite satisfying."

"A spaniel puppy of mine," said Octavia, "plunged into a duck pond yesterday and swam about, never having seen water before. He certainly was doing it with a sense of acquaintance. Otherwise he would never have dared. Perhaps," she added with a smile, "you have inherited from your mother your memories of this seat."

"Possibly. And not only of the seat but the old hall in there, too. More than once, when you have been sitting in the window, I have been startled by

a clear and vivid impression of repeating some past experience."

"Are you addicted to those impressions?"

"No."

"Then you must be as gifted—in some directions—as my spaniel."

"If you care for your spaniel I am grateful for any resemblance. But why should not we fellows—your spaniel and myself—inherit from our parents, or from any ancestor, the impression of an experience? Each event of a life leaves its record on the brain. It is easy to believe that those records, awakened by similar surroundings, might produce a seeming recurrence of the original event."

"It is interesting—at least."

"And not half so incredible as the positive knowledge of the water your puppy has inherited."

"But my puppy's parents really knew the water, whereas your mother had no knowledge of Pandora, nor of this bench. *Her* bench had an inscription."

He stood up. "We are not sure this one has no inscription," and he examined the ends. "Nothing there." Then, with a knee upon the seat he drew aside some of the vines that covered the wall.

"Here it is!" he exclaimed. "Mumsey was right!"

Octavia also stood up, and faced about. Together they began to draw aside the vines. Word by word the inscription was revealed.

"Curious spelling," said Ethan as he loosened tendrils and cleaned out the letters with his knife.

"Must be mighty old. About Chaucer's time, I should think."

"Here is K.O.S.Y.I.E." said Octavia, who was also at work. "What on earth can that mean?"

"The next word may help us," and Ethan dug away at the letters. "Benche. Kosyie Benche."

"A cosy bench," said Octavia.

"Why, of course! That accounts for its being too narrow for three. And here is something that 'speedeth trew,' whatever that may tell us."

A few moments later both stood back and Ethan read aloud the whole inscription:

This kosyie Benche wth goode ronde
Moone speedeth trew Lovirs

Octavia, with some color in her cheeks, took a backward step.

He smiled.

"The charm only works when there is a good, round moon. It must be perfectly safe in the daytime."

She made no reply.

"And as 'trew lovirs' sat on the bench, facing east," he continued, "the goode ronde Moone rose directly in front of them. That early Drumworth who wrote the lines and built the bench was a wise and skilful lover. He knew his business. Also, he had a sense of humor; and, presumably, some experience."

After a quick glance at her face he turned again to the inscription. "Those vines have grown up since Mumsey saw it."

"Evidently."

"Thirty years ago, at least, as she has not been in England since I was born."

"Quite interesting," Octavia answered, but without enthusiasm. "I never knew it was there."

"Mumsey was right—as usual. So my theory of heredity holds good."

"Yes. Your theory still holds good," and she turned away.

At that moment, from the distant village, came faintly to their ears the slow striking of a bell.

"Twelve o'clock!" she exclaimed with a look of surprise. "How long have I been here?"

"About twenty minutes."

"Twenty minutes? Two hours! They will think I am lost." And she walked rapidly away.

"But you have not seen the drawings. I have changes to show you."

"They must wait."

"You will come tomorrow?"

"Perhaps."

And in another moment Ethan Lovejoy stood alone in the old garden.

XIV

ANOTHER VISIT

OF all solitaire games the soonest learned is self-deception. The dullest mind can grasp it. The wisest have ever enjoyed it. We all find solace in its blandishments. No sweeter substitute for courage, conscience and self denial is yet discovered.

Octavia, just at present, was enjoying it to the utmost. She believed—or encouraged the belief that she believed—that these visits to the Baronial Hall were of an architectural nature; that her American was simply an architect, and nothing more. So, the next morning, while aware that yesterday's visit to this draughtsman was of a different character from its predecessors, she decided that it was still her duty, by cheering him in his solitude, to encourage him in his work.

As she started for her garden, wearing the faded straw hat and the calico apron, her grandfather, the Earl of Drumworth, stood watching her from a library window. Tall, erect, of athletic build, he could easily be mistaken—had you failed to see his face—for a man of fifty. His face, however, with

stiff, white eyebrows and deep furrows along the cheeks and mouth, was less deceptive. Barring the mouth and jaw his features were more than good; they were strong, clean cut, of a martial type. To describe this mouth as "firm" or "determined" would give a faint idea of its character. It was believed by various persons to be the hardest mouth in England—or anywhere else. A slit, it seemed, across the iron face; an uncompromising line, despotic and mirthless. No smile had been there in thirty-three years. Nor in thirty-three years had it pronounced a word. The chin beneath resembled the chin of Philip the Second; square, ponderous, bony and aggressive, with no mitigating curves. His light blue eyes were also hard, and they were searching and suspicious. But their expression may have been damaged by thirty-three years of silent rage. Nevertheless, when a younger man he had been considered handsome—something of a lady killer, in fact.

Turning to Auntie George seated by another window, and reading the *Times,* he came and stood over her, moving his fingers to this effect:

"Octavia is looking better. More color."

"Yes indeed! she never looked better. The dear girl seems brighter and happier, too."

"And all of a sudden," remarked the fingers.

"Yes, surprisingly sudden."

"What is the cause?"

Auntie George shook her head.

"May be the good weather," suggested the fingers.

"Yes, that may have much to do with it—together with her work in the garden."

The fierce, gray eyebrows of the old Earl came together in thought. He turned and walked across the library, then back, and again stood before the *Times*. The fingers moved. "It is not the weather. Effect is too sudden."

"Then what is it?"

"She may be in love."

With a contemptuous movement of one shoulder Auntie George slowly shook her head. "Absurd! In the first place there is no one for her to fall in love with—surreptitiously at least; and secondly, she is not that kind of girl."

"Any girl," jerked the fingers, "is all kinds of a girl. I believe she is in love. Nothing else explains it."

Now this old gentleman had, in his youth, given much of his time to the other sex. Auntie George, remembering this, looked up with a smile. "I suppose you consider yourself an authority on women."

Solemnly he nodded.

Auntie George straightened up, laid the *Times* upon her lap and addressed her uncle as she might speak to a child who was either slow of comprehension or perverse.

"Why is it that men always think a woman must be in love? Masculine vanity, I suppose. It hap-

pens in this case that Octavia, the last few days, instead of spending a few moments in her garden, trimming and gathering flowers, has gone seriously to work for an hour or two at a time. She has even sent away old Benson, saying that she preferred to do all the gardening with her own hands. He told me that himself. Now you know as well as I do how a new interest, a fresh enthusiasm, affects the spirits."

He nodded; and the fingers inquired, "You say she sends the gardener away, preferring to be alone?"

"Yes. And it's quite natural. I can understand it."

Slowly up and down the Earl moved his head in sign of approval. His sunless countenance became less gloomy for an instant—its nearest approach to a smile. He elevated the beetling eyebrows, then turned away. When a face has abstained from smiling for thirty-three years its lines of mirth are not easily renewed.

Over the Garden of the Sleeping Beauty that morning, when Octavia entered, the usual silence reigned—the melancholy silence of deserted places. But this deserted place was all aglow with sunshine. When she had fairly entered and paused a moment to breathe the fragrance of its neglected flowers, she heard, from the great window above, the voice of Ethan Lovejoy. It was bursting forth, of a sud-

den, into song. The song, a wordless thing, was unmusically rendered, but delivered with enthusiasm. When, a moment later, she stood in the doorway of the old hall, he abruptly ended his song, faced about and greeted her with a ceremonious bow.

In front of him, also facing her, stood—or rather moved—Baseborn. And it was evident that Baseborn intended his movements to express an equally cordial greeting. While agitating his crooked tail with joyous excitement he was laboring in front, up and down, plunging like a ship at sea—or like a rocking horse. For Baseborn, heavily built about the neck and shoulders and clumsy behind, was not designed for airy grace. This present behavior was clearly the involuntary manifestation of an irrepressible glee. In executing these movements he slowly backed away, as she advanced, but always facing her.

Octavia acknowledged the welcome of these two beings by curtsies, one for the man and one for the dog. Then, as she approached the drawing table, inquired:

"What is that song you were trying to sing?"

Lovejoy without replying turned to the dog. "Baseborn, did you hear that? *Trying* to sing!"

Octavia smiled. "You tried and succeeded. It was splendidly rendered. But what is it? I have heard it before but cannot recall its name."

"The name of that piece of music," said Ethan, "is 'See the Conquering Hero Comes.'"

"Thank you. I am very much honored. And perhaps you would not mind telling me how you happened to know just the moment I entered the garden, to time the greeting with such precision."

"That was very simple. I made Baseborn sit on the window seat, for I knew his joy at your approach would, like my own, be hard to repress. So, when his tail began to thump against the casement and there came a great effulgence in the garden, then I knew the soul of an honest dog was bursting with rapture; that the old yew trees were trying to clap their hands; that the roses of Anne Boleyn were blushing and smiling and nodding their heads."

Octavia reddened slightly, then lowered her eyes to the drawing. "So you knew all that?"

"Oh, yes, I knew all that! Which is why, at the proper moment—the psychological second—a splendid chorus of ten thousand male voices burst upon the air in a song of praise and thanksgiving. And perhaps you noticed, or rather felt, the accompaniment?"

"No."

"What! Not the silent symphony of Baseborn's expanding soul?"

She shook her head, still studying the drawing. In a reflective tone he added, also looking at the drawing:

"Two dogs with but a single thought."

"Your voice and method," said Octavia, "are both remarkable. But less astonishing perhaps than your courage in trying to sing."

"More thanks. I would rather you considered me brave than—melodious."

Octavia expressed surprise at the progress he had made since her last inspection of the drawings.

"How can you work with that bandaged hand?"

"Oh, that hand doesn't really work. It merely moves the T square and triangle."

Then followed questions and answers, criticisms and suggestions. Her interest in this work was serious, and intelligent. At last, taking up a little catalogue of engravings that lay beside the drawing, she studied the portrait upon its cover.

"Whose head is that?"

"Abraham Lincoln's."

"Not handsome, was he?"

"No, very homely—and unpretending and strong and wise and gentle. He was also self-sacrificing, and absolutely honest. And his sense of humor was unquenchable."

She raised her face and regarded him with a peculiar expression. "That is a perfect description of your own character!"

Ethan Lovejoy, as his eyes met hers, saw that she was in earnest. Into his face came a sudden color that resembled a blush. He looked down at his work and shook his head.

"No! no! I wish it were."

"But it *is!*" persisted Octavia, enjoying his embarrassment. "Was Lincoln tall and thin?"

"Yes, very tall and very thin."

"But strong, physically?"

"Indeed he was! Exceptionally strong."

"Then you are like him physically too! And I am not sure that even your faces are not alike. That is, you look as he may have looked when he was younger and before he became, quite so—so noticeably plain."

He smiled. "You could not pay me a higher compliment. He was as sublime a hero as ever lived and died for his country."

"So would *you* live and die for your country. And for even less than your country." With a smile she added: "I have seen you at a fire."

He also smiled, but lowered his eyes to the drawing. "Seriously, I tremble for this high opinion of me you seem resolved to maintain. It was merely physical courage you witnessed at that fire—the very commonest form of the article. My tumble will be of corresponding distance. I feel it in my bones. One more display of my agility at a fire and you will have me in the same class with Regulus, the Chevalier Bayard, and George Washington."

"Agility!" she repeated, turning again to the drawing. "You certainly have chosen a modest word. But what is that figure on the terrace? It seems a very poor place for a statue."

"It's not a statue, merely a man I drew to show

the scale." And as he spoke, he began to rub the figure out.

"Now," said Octavia, "he looks like a ghost—the ghost of some American tourist."

"American tourists," said Ethan, "seldom wear armor. And they never haunt castles—that is, not after death. Besides, he has a British aspect. He lacks the beauty and fine distinction of the American millionaire tourist. Still, he might be an American millionaire come over to marry his daughter to a British nobleman."

After a pause Octavia looked up. "Tell me, for which of the two, in that case, have you most sympathy, the bride or the groom?"

"The groom. He needs the money and has to marry whatever will bring it. Whereas the woman has no pinching need of a title. With the man it is good business. With the woman it is neither business nor sentiment. He marries a woman who is for sale."

"So is *he* for sale."

"Yes, but for a price that saves himself and his family. Whereas the woman has not that excuse. If I were Lord Hepsford, for instance, and in love with the English woman that he is in love with, and the family required—"

"But perhaps he is not."

"He is! He must be! He couldn't help it!"

Octavia turned away as he spoke, and moved toward the window. And he thought, from a rapid

glance at what he could see of one cheek, that more color had come into it.

"You seem to know a great deal about it—Lord Hepsford and his feelings."

"I do. Not so much about Lord Hepsford as about his inevitable feelings. And if the family finances required that I should give her up, why—I—oh, I just wouldn't!"

Octavia laughed, involuntarily. But the laugh was low and barely reached his ears. It ended in a little exclamation of amusement. On the seat before her rested a queer little vase, gaudily colored and over decorated; in it a flower.

"One of Anne Boleyn's roses!" she exclaimed.

"Thank you. But you should not pick them. It is really too dangerous. And what an amazing little vase! Where on earth did you find it?"

"In the village, at Simeon Blake's."

She took it up and studied it. "Well, I should think so! It looks like Simeon's taste. Isn't it hideous!"

"It is a present for you, and I paid threepence for it. I can't say I like your language when receiving gifts."

Octavia laughed. It was a quiet little laugh, but spontaneous, involuntary, and from a happy heart. Had her grandfather or Auntie George been present they would have been surprised. For several months had passed since they had heard a similar sound from Octavia's lips.

"Is it really for me? Then I beg your pardon. It is lovely. But you must admit the rose is even *more* beautiful. Not more beautiful, perhaps, but—but in a different style."

"Yes, I will admit that; but nothing more."

Comfortably settled in her usual corner at the window Octavia took the rose from the ridiculous vase, and after breathing its perfume a moment tucked it in the front of her dress. Lovejoy went on with his work. The silence, for a time, was broken only by the singing of one or two birds in the old garden.

Through the open window came the voice of a dog barking in a neighboring field. Baseborn sprang to his feet as if receiving a challenge from a foe—as is the manner of dogs. He jumped upon the vacant window-seat, the one opposite Octavia. Standing upon his hind legs, his front feet upon the sill, he also barked, projecting his message through the open casement, out over the peaceful landscape. This sudden rending of the air, warlike and harsh, startled the birds and disturbed the slumbering memories of the Garden of the Sleeping Beauty. It also disturbed Octavia. She frowned. "Stop it, you horrid dog!"

But Baseborn barked again.

"Baseborn," said Lovejoy, "shut up. Mind that lady. She owns this castle and everybody in it, and if we don't behave, you and I, we shall be forcibly ejected, and bundled off to America."

Baseborn, without moving his feet, turned his head and regarded Octavia in surprise, as if to say, "Really! Is that true?"

The inquiring look was so very human that Octavia leaned her head against the wall, and again she laughed.

Then another silence.

In the soft air this June morning, coming gently through the open casement, Octavia felt the serene, unquestioning joy of a perfect contentment. Forgotten, at present, were certain former unsatisfied yearnings, the result of disappointed hopes; of unrealized dreams. Now, the first time in a year or more, she was really happy. And there was no desire to learn the cause. She merely closed her eyes, took long, deep breaths of the perfumes of the ancient garden, and enjoyed the passing hour. With such experiences of perfect happiness there often comes the consciousness—or fear—that these unwonted moments are too good to last—that payment in corresponding degree may be exacted later. So it was with Octavia. These moments of perfect contentment, while long remembered, are seldom realized, at the time, in their fullest value. To those two people, taking a deeper joy in each other's presence than either realized—or than Octavia would have admitted even to herself—there seemed no reason, this perfect June morning, why this visit, or others like it, should not continue indefinitely.

XV

FROM A TREW LOVIR

DURING this eloquent silence—eloquent because it proclaimed the significant truth that words were no longer necessary—Ethan Lovejoy, with occasional stealthy glances toward the lady at the window, tore off a piece of tracing paper and wrote upon it. Folding to a small dimension and concealing it in the palm of his hand, he arose carelessly, as for relief from work. Humming any old tune, he strolled with crafty indifference down the hall, behind his visitor.

In a corner of the chimney stood a marble statue of Pandora. This figure, the size of life, was mounted on a pedestal which brought the casket in one of her hands about on a level with Ethan's head. Pandora's other hand was pressed against her cheek as she gazed, with startled eyes, at the open box. Into this box, after assuring himself that he was not observed, Ethan hastily dropped his note. On the way back to his drawing, he paused before a portrait and inquired, carelessly, merely to divert any possible suspicion from a serious purpose in his journey, "Whose portrait is this, full length,

all in brown with a gun in his hand?" There being no reply he added:

"The tough-looking chap with the jaw."

"That is my grandfather."

"Not the present earl?"

"Yes."

Ethan, with a contrite face, came and stood before her. "I beg your pardon. He is so much younger—and—I—from his costume—"

"You are forgiven. We all know that his expression is not amiable—and that he has a jaw."

"But I am ashamed: heartily ashamed. I supposed it the portrait of a dead and gone ancestor. But that does not excuse me."

"Oh yes it does! Poor grandfather's expression is not amiable. That is common knowledge. But he has good reason to be grim and embittered."

Ethan drew his unbandaged hand across his forehead as if to stimulate his memory. "Please shut me up if it is none of my business; but he lost the power of speech very suddenly, did he not?"

"Very suddenly."

"Marvelous tales are told in the village, all of which you have probably heard."

"Yes, a great many. But what have *you* heard?"

Ethan seated himself on the opposite seat in the window. "Well, they are too silly to repeat. But one is that, on a summer's night, long ago, he lost his temper, which was a bad one, and so hot was his rage that it withered all power of speech. Another

tale is that he shook his fist at heaven and was cursing his Maker when his Maker cursed back and rendered him forever dumb. Another that he hurled his young bride from a high tower and—"

Octavia moved impatiently; then straightened up and frowned. "Those tales I have heard. They are interesting samples of what ignorant people can believe. And too ridiculous, one would think, for other people to enjoy."

"I did not enjoy them. But please be fair. You asked what I had heard. I merely referred to them as curiosities; not as history. Again I beg your pardon. Not because I am guilty, but because you are offended."

"I am not offended."

"Then you are favoring Baseborn and me with an excellent imitation. But perhaps your kindness of heart persuades you to the contrary."

Octavia raised her eyebrows, and tilted her chin. She also made a feeble attempt at a smile. But the attempt was a failure.

"Don't you think," said Ethan, "that a certain ignorance of civilized manners might be forgiven the untutored, western savage?"

"There is a difference, even in savages."

"Have you known many?"

"Only one."

Other silent seconds passed, Octavia looking idly out the window; Ethan, with a half suppressed smile, studying the lady's face. At last her eyes

turned slowly toward him. "You believe my grandfather has a frightful temper."

"I believe nothing without your approval."

"He did have a temper when he was younger. And he has tried hard to conquer it. Such a temper is a hideous misfortune—a curse."

"Do you inherit?"

She smiled, faintly, leaned back and resumed her old position, turning her face toward the garden. "Yes; you saw it the other day when I insulted you and your country, and threw your flowers out the window."

"Oh, well, it's a weak inheritance if that's the worst you can do!"

Folding her hands in her lap and leaning forward, Octavia spoke in a more serious tone. "All that we really know is this. Years ago, grandfather's second wife, a mere girl of eighteen, was sitting one evening with the rest of the family in the library here at the castle, when she laid down her needlework and walked out on the terrace—the long garden terrace that overlooks the river. My two great aunts who were sitting in the room with her saw my grandfather pass through the hall, a moment afterwards, as if following her. She never returned. She was never seen again by any of the family: nor by anybody we know."

Ethan Lovejoy raised his eyebrows. He also puckered his lips as if about to whistle. But no sound came forth.

Octavia continued. "When my grandfather returned, two or three hours later, he seemed a different man. He had lost all power of speech. And during the thirty years and more that have followed he has never been seen to smile."

"Well, that *is* mysterious. But, was there no suspicion of—of—"

"Murder? No, not for a moment. My grandfather said she was alive and well. Beyond that he tells nothing. The subject is never alluded to in the family."

"But you surely have some theory about it."

"There is a story of a letter coming to the castle, months afterwards, directed in her handwriting; but it was seen only by the postman. My grandfather never spoke of it."

"Most mysterious!" murmured Ethan. "But somebody must know *something* about it."

"We think it may have been a sudden impulse, as she took nothing with her; not even a wrap, or hat."

"Was she an erratic lady, and given to surprising deeds?"

"Not at all. She was a most well behaved, sensible person, and rather domestic. Not at all adventurous."

"She was your grandmother?"

"Oh, no! She was grandfather's second wife—and much younger than himself."

Ethan looked down at Baseborn, then out over the garden, gently tapping the window-sill with his

fingers. "Well, combined with the Earl of Drumworth's loss of speech, it beats anything I have heard in the way of a mystery. I don't quite see how the rest of the family could resist clearing it up."

"You would easily understand if you knew my grandfather. Nobody in the family or in the village, nor anywhere else for that matter, dares refer to it in his presence. It has embittered his whole life."

"Was it literally during the hour or two of his absence, the time of her disappearance, that he lost his speech?"

"Yes."

"They seem to believe in the village there was—"

"What?"

"Oh, the usual gossip. Nothing in particular."

"What were you going to say?"

"I am afraid."

She smiled. "I will protect you. Finish the sentence."

"Another man in the case."

An affirmative movement of Octavia's head.

Ethan reflected a moment. "I have no reverence for the proprieties. Respectability bores me and I know conventionality to be the refuge of the timid and the dull. So I should always do the wrong thing in social emergencies. But had I a wife whom I loved more than I loved myself, and she ran away with a better man in her opinion than Ethan Lovejoy, I think I should behave badly. There could

be no middle course. I should either be grateful for the relief or—overtake him."

"My grandfather could not overtake him. They sailed for South America and we heard the ship was wrecked."

"Was she pretty, this runaway lady?"

"Oh, remarkably pretty! Her portrait, for years, hung over the mantel in my chamber. It was a gentle, lovable face."

Ethan smiled. "One can easily understand its removal to a shadowy corner."

"But the portrait and I were best of friends. I must find it."

"Perhaps it's up in that gallery there, at the end of the Hall. Seems a mysterious place. It might be hiding a lot of secrets; missing documents, deeds and blood stained wills. Do you know what is really up there?"

"Yes, the very things you mention; discarded furniture, portraits, old papers, all kinds of rubbish."

The architect and his visitor, both in pensive mood at their opposite corners of the old window, looked out over the drowsy garden. At last Octavia, her head still resting against the paneling, slowly turned her eyes in Ethan's direction, and inquired the hour.

Putting his good hand up under the ridiculous blouse he drew forth his watch. "According to this timepiece, which is absolutely reliable, it is now a

lovely morning in the month of June. It says the hour is of no importance."

Baseborn, either attracted by the glitter of the gold or impelled by a desire for closer knowledge of the passing time, arose and put his nose to the watch. Ethan turned the face so that he could see it better. "Am I right, old man? Is further information superfluous?"

It so happened, that as he finished speaking Baseborn bowed his head and sneezed. The two human beings laughed, involuntarily. Ethan replaced his watch. "The majority is against the lady. Further questions on that subject will be considered an impertinence."

But Octavia rose, as if to go.

"Oh!" he exclaimed with a frown. "Not already! And after what Baseborn said?"

"That depends upon the hour."

"It is twenty minutes past eleven."

"Then I must go."

"Please tarry—just a little. I have something of great importance to say to you."

"About what?"

"About—about—er—what are you most interested in?"

With a contemptuous motion of the head Octavia took up her basket. Ethan Lovejoy also stood up. "Please give me three minutes more. For this is a vital matter."

She paused, but without regarding him, as if patiently waiting.

"Is your correspondence," he asked, "especially interesting as a rule?"

She turned toward him in mild surprise.

"I mean, do you receive many letters that combine, in the highest degree, entertainment with instruction?"

The only reply to this question was a suspicious glance. Being familiar with this American's tendency to promiscuous nonsense, she murmured, indifferently, "And if I do? And if I don't?"

"Because I have a strange presentiment, an unaccountable, overmastering conviction, that Pandora over there has a precious communication for you, and is waiting for you to take it."

"She can wait."

"Oh, how can you be so snubby to Pandora—and so cruel to the writer of the letter?"

"Who is the writer?"

"How should I know? Would I presume to read your letters?"

After a moment's hesitation Octavia replaced her basket on the seat and moved, in a somewhat disdainful manner, toward Pandora. In front of the statue she stopped and turned about. "I give you fair warning, were you all the heroes of history, I shall not forgive you if I am deceived."

But Ethan, with a sober face, had seated himself before his drawings, and appeared hard at work.

Octavia, reaching up a hand, inserted her fingers cautiously in the marble box. Encountering a piece of folded note paper she brought it forth. There was dust upon it. With a little snap of a finger to remove this dust she returned to the window and took her usual seat. Ethan Lovejoy did not look up from his work. The little note was yellow with age; the ink seemed faded. Octavia smiled at what she considered an excellent imitation of antiquity, and at the pains he had evidently bestowed upon it. But the smile departed as, in silence, she read these lines:

To My Own

Nothing, dearest, us shall sever,
Heart to heart, and parting never.
Of all earthly hopes and blisses,
Of all dreams the sweetest this is,
Just our Kosyie Benche with moonlight
And a garden breathing kisses.

From her False Poet but
"Trew Lovir,"
E. L.

With burning cheeks she rose from her seat. The paper dropped from her fingers. Instead of reaching the floor it fluttered into the garden basket on the bench beside her. She stood for an instant, erect, uncertain. All the pride of a reserved and sensitive spirit was in high revolt. Yet, while seriously offended, she felt, even at the moment, less of anger than of grief. Had Ethan Lovejoy looked

up at that moment, and seen her face, this interview might have ended differently. In a low voice, with a slight tremor, she asked, still hoping there was some mistake:

"Did you write it?"

Straightening up, with his head to one side, but with eyes ever on his drawing he replied, "Does not the signature tell who wrote it?"

And with a wave of his pencil, as if in acknowledgment of praise, "We greater poets, when our souls are free, can work just such wonders. How does it strike you?"

In silence Octavia took up her basket. Her sorrow—her disappointment in this man—was even deeper than her anger. She suffered—keenly suffered—under the sudden realization that, after all, he was not a gentleman, that he knew no better, and that she herself was to blame in permitting such advances. Without further words she walked away. And when Ethan Lovejoy at last wheeled about and exclaimed, "But you are not off like that!" she still continued without turning, passed out through the doorway—and was gone.

XVI

A LADY THINKS

BENEATH the cloistered arches, through her own little garden and along the great terrace, Octavia marched with burning cheeks. Her anger, kept alive by the memory of the odious verse, was more endurable, however, than her sense of shame at having allowed this—or any other—man to believe that he could take such liberty. The very fact of his doing it signified small belief in her dignity, her womanly pride, or even in her self respect.

Hastening to her chamber she dropped into the nearest chair. Then, with an elbow on the table, her chin in a hand, she thought—and thought—and thought, with swift alternations of sorrow, anger, and contempt. The more she thought, however, the calmer she became, until, at last, she almost pitied the man for his folly.

This room of Octavia's, in one of the great, corner towers of the castle, was of peculiar shape, being almost round. A spacious chamber paneled to the ceiling, richly furnished and with many pictures—mostly family portraits—it contained also a multi-

plicity of personal treasures; feminine things, photographs of friends, favors—and was never without flowers. Although a large room it had but one window. That window, however, was wide and high, with stone mullions.

Octavia gazed sadly through this window, over the meadows to the south and the woods to the west, but seeing nothing. She was suffering a bitter disappointment. And spoiled children are not, as a rule, equipped for disappointment. Between spasms of indignation at the astounding impertinence of this American's verse she had, for the man himself, a feeling of commiseration. Deep was her regret that so interesting a person—and otherwise so enjoyable—should be guilty of such an offense. As a display of bad taste, and of ill breeding, she could not forget it.

So, in sorrowing silence, with moist and blinking eyes, Octavia gazed out into the joyous sunshine of this perfect day. The tear that started slowly down a cheek was more of mourning than of anger. The anger came only at intervals, when she recalled the verse.

In those other and more merciful intervals she made allowance for the nationality of the offender, which was, of course, more his misfortune than his fault. His instincts, she believed, were good. But, born of ordinary parents, reared in a raw community where a gentleman was seldom seen, where finer feelings were unknown, or despised, where his par-

ents and himself were inevitable results of a purely commercial country, where people of refinement did not—and probably could not—exist, it was, perhaps, unjust to blame him for his ignorance of the manners and customs of good society. His parents were probably common people, and while his residence abroad had given him a certain knowledge of external deportment he would prove wanting at the real test, as she had just discovered.

No, he was not a gentleman.

And yet, looking back upon her hours in his company, his manners, his language, always of a cultivated person, and, above all, his splendid courage at the fire, his quiet heroism,—she closed her eyes and pressed both hands against her temples.

Confusion racked her brain. The more she thought, the more she wavered. Then, like an imp of evil came dancing through her head,

"—breathing kisses."

With the recollection of these words Octavia's cheeks never failed to tingle. In a flurry of anger she stood up. Wheeling about, impelled by an impulse she could not explain, her eyes turned as if for enlightenment to an empty space upon the wall, between two portraits. This space, years ago, had been filled by a family portrait, but of whom or why removed she had forgotten. The same impulse, whatever its origin or significance, had caused her, more than once since her acquaintance with this

American, to look inquiringly in that direction. This unexplained prompting, with her unreasoning obedience, always brought the same result, a sense of being deceived. Yet, she could not resist the suspicion, however absurd, of some remote connection between Ethan Lovejoy and this forgotten portrait.

The suspicion, whether wise or foolish, seemed stronger at the present moment than ever before. She closed her eyes, then looked again at the vacant place as if for a solution of this enigma; this puzzling, unfortunate trick—of her imagination, perhaps.

But, even if a trick of her imagination she felt there must be some origin, or cause. And why, unfailingly, this particular spot, this vacant bit of wall? She began to wonder if the impression of a face might linger in the brain when all memory of the face itself had faded. Even if that were possible who was the sitter for this portrait?—a portrait not seen since childhood yet still exerting such an influence. And what the mystic power that her eyes, with no volition of her own, should be drawn unerringly to this vacant space? And why was it that her curiosity was never excited, that her eyes never sought this empty space except when the American was in her thoughts? What conceivable relation, ancestral, personal or pictorial could possibly exist between the forgotten relative and this absolute stranger from a far away land?

With a frown of vexation she moved impatiently away and gave herself to other matters.

So sensitive was Octavia's face, so responsive to her own emotions, that even her grandfather, as they sat at lunch that day, took notice. He tapped upon the table, his usual method of gaining attention; and when her eyes, from restless wanderings over the sunny lawn, came back and met his own, he moved his fingers.

"Not feeling well?" they inquired.

She nodded and smiled. "Oh, yes! very well. Why do you ask?"

He made no answer, merely a slight shrug of the shoulders. Had he a voice this movement might have been expressed by a word or two of doubt.

"You do seem a bit out of sorts," said Auntie George. "Has anything gone wrong?"

"No, indeed! Nothing whatever."

And to prove the truth of her words Octavia brightened up and talked of anything. An hour later, however, when the old Earl was alone with Auntie George, his fingers referred to Octavia, and they added, "Same old look under eyes. Has come all of a sudden."

Auntie George moved her head with solemn assent. "Yes, and I cannot account for it. She seems very well, otherwise, and I am sure nothing has occurred to disturb her. She has no secrets, you know."

"Don't like to see it," said the fingers. And they went up stairs.

Octavia made serious efforts during the day to think no more of this depreciated American, this hero of common clay. Such efforts were unsuccessful. He was continually in her mind, and to the exclusion of other things.

In the afternoon, she walked to the village to attend a little meeting of the library committee, and as she walked she despised herself for allowing the memory of this tactless foreigner to absorb her thoughts.

From these self reproaches she was suddenly awakened, on the main street of the village, by the unexpected appearance of the invader himself. Emerging somewhat hastily from the little stationer's shop he turned in her direction. Both he and Octavia, in their surprise, stopped short, and only a few feet apart.

For an instant they confronted each other in silence. Then the lady, with a perfunctory smile and a polite but formal word of greeting, started forward. He took a backward step, still standing in her way. Octavia, raising her eyebrows as if in mild surprise, looked calmly into his face—such a look as the queen of Sheba might bestow upon a puddle in the street, or any other obstacle of similar importance. But the tactless American stood undismayed. He looked as calmly into her own eyes as she into his—and spoke.

Octavia lowered her eyes to Baseborn, who stood looking up into her face, wagging his tail as if he, at least, acknowledged no strained relations and believed in peace and love. But, unluckily, Baseborn was not arbiter in this affair.

"It surely is not impertinent, Lady Octavia, to ask what I have done to offend you. Even the worst law-breakers, the most desperate criminals, are permitted to know of what they are accused."

Raising her eyes from Baseborn, and looking at a child across the street playing with a doll in a doorway, she hesitated, then replied:

"I think you know."

"On my honor I do not! What is it?"

There was earnestness in his manner, sincerity in his voice. With his hands he made, unconsciously, a slight gesture of protestation and appeal.

Octavia wavered. Involutarily her glance came back to his face and she felt, in meeting his eyes—those strangely familiar grey eyes—the old spell. She was on the verge of smiling and saying something pleasant but noncommittal, to bring an end to this awkward meeting, when again, and it seemed for the hundredth time that day, came dancing into her head,

"—breathing kisses."

She frowned, drew back with blushing cheeks and lowered her eyes. In a voice hardly more than a whisper, but distinctly heard, she said, "Then you never *will* know."

And stepping off the narrow little sidewalk into the street, she passed around him and walked rapidly away.

But, even before she had reached the Library, less than five minutes' walk, she half repented. The sudden anger, always created by the memory of that detested verse, yielded to a mild reaction. On the steps of the building she paused and looked back, hoping to see the offender, and, by look or word, mitigate the severity of his punishment. But no American was in sight.

During the meeting of the Library committee repentance flourished. And with it came the now familiar sense of shame at the manner in which her thoughts today were ever wandering from the business in hand. Present at this meeting were Octavia, Mrs. Wherry, the doctor's wife, the Futile Librarian of noble birth and the wife of the rector. Mrs. Wherry was a gentle old lady of lethargic habit whose attention, when directed for any length of time upon one subject, floated quietly away into the land of Nod. Not so the rector's wife. She was a stout, middle-aged matron with a rugged, benevolent face, iron-grey hair and a positive but not unpleasant manner. Next to Octavia and Auntie George she was the most influential woman in the village. Business relating to the Library had never been shirked by Octavia. Her interest never flagged. Today there was question of rearrangement of certain shelves and of the purchase of new volumes.

As these four ladies sat at one end of a large table in the librarian's room, pencils in hand with a list of books and other papers before them, Octavia found difficulty in concealing from her three companions the mortifying vagrancy of her thoughts. Although the voices of these women had a soothing effect she could not forget the look in Ethan Lovejoy's eyes a few moments ago; his evident honesty in protesting ignorance of his offense, his—

"What do you think, Lady Octavia?" and the rector's wife leaned back and removed her eyeglasses. "It seems to me it would be a mistake."

Octavia blinked and returned to the meeting. With a presence of mind that surprised herself she answered, reflectively, "Yes, possibly."

"Although published long ago the work is still inquired for," admitted the Futile Librarian.

Octavia nodded a hesitating approval, then made a venture. "What is the exact title of the book, in full?"

The rector's wife looked inquiringly at the Futile Librarian, who frowned and tapped her forehead with a pencil.

"Dear me! How annoying! I really forget, but it is the one that made such a stir years ago—that ignores religion in explaining the origin of man. The book is distinctly sacrilegious, in my opinion. But readers of Huxley's other works often ask for it."

The word Huxley came to Octavia as the sight of land to Columbus.

"I should be exceedingly sorry," said the rector's wife, "to be in any way instrumental toward the development of atheism in this community."

Octavia nodded approval. "So should I. But let us look it over. If it seems really dangerous, we can act accordingly."

The rector's wife, who would sooner oppose the British Army than the Lady of Drumworth Castle, expressed her approval of the idea. Mrs. Wherry, being asleep, offered no remonstrance. When other questions arose relating to the rearrangement of the fiction alcove, to a new catalogue, what books to weed out, etc., Octavia's fancy again spread its wings and again, to her shame, kept floating away to the great sunlit window in the Baronial Hall.

Again the most offensive line of that offensive verse forced itself upon her memory; but now—perhaps from having achieved its malign purpose—little anger was aroused. And as she recalled the architect's unobjectionable behavior through their various meetings, his unfailing tact, and, in spite of continual bantering and nonsense, his perfect courtesy with never a moment of indiscretion or familiarity, she felt that she had been unjust. Perhaps those detestable lines were written in a hurry, or thoughtlessly copied from another's poem. And then —even if really guilty of this transgression, this sin, this misdemeanor, lapse, slip, or whatever it was—

even then, in view of his splendid action at the fire, his splendid courage, his quiet heroism, even then—

"Do you recall any, Lady Octavia?"

It was the voice of the rector's wife. And the eyes of the rector's wife were regarding her. Moreover, she leaned forward and looked over her glasses, evidently attaching importance to the coming reply.

Once more Octavia pulled herself together. But this time there came no accidental word of rescue, no aid from the Futile Librarian. The question itself, which might apply to almost anything in the solar system, offered no assistance, not the faintest clue to any previous utterance. And not for worlds would Octavia hurt the feelings of the rector's wife whose present earnest look showed clearly that she had been speaking with all the seriousness of a very serious nature. In this crisis, however, no human tact was of much avail. So, Octavia, with an angel smile, inquired,

"Any what?"

"Any who do it."

"Do what?"

"Spell properly."

"Any people who spell properly?"

"Yes, of that nation."

"Of what nation?"

The vicar's wife raised, then lowered her eyebrows. She compressed her lips and leaned back in her chair. Once more, but late in the day, the

Futile Librarian came unwittingly to the rescue.

"There must be *some* Americans who do it."

Then Octavia understood. And she addressed the rector's wife with irresistible charm: "After all, it is chiefly in omitting the *u* from certain words."

"Yes, but Lady Octavia, that is a very grave matter. The rector feels as I do that the purity of the English tongue should be respected and preserved. Careless and ignorant spelling in a literary person is inexcusable. The rector has often said so. And besides, as we all agreed the other day, there are no American authors of value; none whose books are needed in the Library."

"Did I say that?" and Octavia's face showed incredulity.

"Yes," said the rector's wife.

"Yes," said the Futile Librarian.

"Oh! did I? Well—if I did, I—I think—perhaps—I have changed my mind."

With pained surprise the rector's wife inquired, "Have you been reading American literature?"

Now, as it happened, the only American literature recently read by Octavia was that calamitous verse which had aroused such anger and contempt. Nevertheless, she answered pleasantly, with a little more color in her cheeks,

"No; that is, what little I have read of their literature is unimportant. But I believe that occasional Americans are quite well educated."

The rector's wife hesitated. "Yes, there must be some education among them, of course. But the influence of American literature is certainly most pernicious. Their authors are always trying to be funny—merely comic writers."

"But Hawthorne, Emerson and Longfellow," ventured the Futile Librarian, "are not always funny!"

The rector's wife heaved a sigh, wearily, as of a serious-minded but very patient person annoyed by foolish questions. "I am not familiar with their more obscure writers, but the other day I bought a book quite famous, in America, 'Innocents Abroad.' I naturally supposed from the title it was the travels of children for instruction. After presenting it to my little daughters I found it to be a most offensive book, showing extraordinary ignorance; very silly, and sacrilegious."

"Oh, fancy!" and the Futile Librarian closed her eyes in heartfelt sympathy. "Who wrote it?"

"I am not absolutely sure," replied the rector's wife. Then, frowning in a mental effort, "Could it have been Abraham Lincoln? He was a humorous person."

"If it's a bad book," said Octavia, "he did not write it."

"I am not so sure. He was a most contemptible character."

"Abraham Lincoln?"

"Yes. I was reading about him quite recently—a perfectly impartial account written by a Charles-

ton lady during their Civil War. She certainly knew, and she says repeatedly that he was a most offensive person of the lowest origin; vulgar, boorish, silly and ignorant. He became despotic and bloodthirsty. And he was ribald in conversation."

Octavia straightened up. Color flew to her cheeks. In her eyes was the light of battle. "Abraham Lincoln was a splendid man. He was gentle, kind and brave. He died for his country. No greater hero ever lived. I know all about him."

The rector's wife, with lips apart and eyes wide open, stared at Lady Octavia. She stared in silence, a silence that was literally breathless; for, in her surprise, she forgot to breathe. Never had she—or the Futile Librarian—seen their president display so much warmth in quite so sudden a manner. Mrs. Wherry, aroused by the speaker's decisive tone, opened her eyes. She had not heard the names of the person they were discussing but she smiled and nodded approval.

"Yes, yes, indeed! A real hero. An honor to England."

There was an awkward silence. Then, Octavia, somewhat ashamed by her sudden outburst, smiled upon the rector's wife and added, in a most pacific manner, "Please do not think I wish to contradict you. I cannot help believing the lady you mention was—was perhaps mistaken. I beg your pardon."

The rector's wife hastily nodded forgiveness. "Oh, please don't think of it again, dear Lady

Octavia! Your defense was certainly right and proper. It is much to his credit that he turned out as well as he did."

So the incident was closed. And the committee went on with its other business.

Half an hour later Octavia entered the shop of Simeon Blake, the most ancient structure in Drumworth village. Less than twenty feet in width, only two low stories in height, it bore, in wrought iron figures beneath its pointed gable, its date of birth, 1492—the year of a fateful discovery. Over the door, across the front of the building ran a faded sign,

SIMEON BLAKE,

REPAIRING NEATLY DONE.

Through the thick little Tudor glass window panes in the shop's front was dimly visible a unique assortment of ancient cakes. These cakes were faded, sunburnt and fly blown. From the contents of this window, and the sign above, a stranger might infer that jumbles, buns and Shrewsbury cakes were neatly repaired; that ancient gingerbread and other weather beaten dainties from the baker's oven were restored to youth by Simeon Blake. But these cakes were not for repair. They were made by the owner's wife, now dead a year or more, and were treasured with affection by her faithful husband.

Octavia found nobody in the little shop. From

the back room, however, came the gentle voice of Simeon Blake, talking with a customer. So, being in no haste, and knowing that Simeon would neglect all mortal customers to wait upon herself—a thing she always detested—she seated herself in a chair against the wall, partly in the shadow of a projecting bookcase. In this venerable shop the light was always dim, even in brightest weather.

Although familiar with the varied collection that now surrounded her, Octavia never failed of entertainment in the study of Simeon's possessions. For to Simeon's stock in trade there were no limitations. His line of goods was modest, but he dealt in anything: in glassware and clothing, in cutlery and books, in toys and bric-a-brac, in barometers and umbrellas; from pins to furniture, from banjos to coffins.

As Octavia's glance moved idly along the shelf she saw the twin brother—or sister—of the gaudy little vase presented to her that morning by Ethan Lovejoy. And before she had recovered from the softening influence of this vulgar, over decorated little object—for it recalled a pleasant episode—the American himself, preceded by Baseborn, walked into the shop.

Baseborn came straight to Octavia, wagging his crooked tail, and clearly showing his delight at the unexpected meeting. Dogs have better eyes than humans for seeing in the dark. Ethan Lovejoy, who was not observing Baseborn's movements, stood

for an instant, as Octavia herself had done on entering, and listened to the voices in the farther room. Also, like her, he decided to remain until Simeon Blake came out. He leaned against the counter as one who expects to wait.

That he thought himself alone in the shop was evident. Octavia, in her dusky corner, realized, of course, that a person coming in from the outer daylight might fail to see her. As he stood with his back against a show case, he folded his arms and frowned into space. His head drooped forward. To the person who happened to be watching him it was clear that his thoughts were of a most absorbing nature—and depressing. A sadder, more melancholy figure she had rarely seen.

To relieve the situation and make known her presence, Octavia moved a foot upon the floor, and slightly changed her attitude. Ethan's eyes, as they opened calmly and turned in her direction, showed no surprise. They could discern a face in the shadowy corner; but that was all. Octavia suspected this, and to save further embarrassment for both, she spoke. And in choosing her words she remembered that too hasty a forgiveness would merely cheapen her in his eyes. Besides, she was by no means sure that he deserved forgiveness. So, politely, but in the same tone and manner as she would have addressed any stranger in the village, she said:

"Mr. Blake will return in a few minutes."

Ethan Lovejoy raised his hat, and replied with

equal politeness and in much the same manner: "Thank you. I will call again."

Replacing his hat he turned and passed out of the shop. Through the thick little diamonds of Tudor glass she saw him cross the street and disappear along the opposite sidewalk.

But Baseborn, after a glance of surprise at his departing benefactor, stood for a moment looking up into Octavia's face. He seemed to be demanding some explanation for this surprisingly brief and unfinished interview. Receiving no enlightenment from the eyes—already repenting—that were looking through the open door, he slowly turned about, and with obvious disapproval.

Then he also walked away.

XVII

VARIOUS EMOTIONS

FROM the village to Drumworth Castle there are two roads. One follows the south bank of the river, and the ferryman rows you across. The other, on the north side, is farther from the river, and from this road you approach the castle by a perfectly straight avenue half a mile in length, between rows of ancient trees, tall and wide spreading.

Returning by this avenue, after the unexpected meeting at Simeon Blake's, Octavia's mind was still busy, at intervals, in deciding on a suitable punishment for the offending American. The decision was not easy. Such punishment required tact and a delicate touch, for there was just a possibility of his being innocent. It also required firmness and a reasonable severity—otherwise the offense might be repeated.

While struggling with this problem Octavia heard, behind her, the feet of a cantering horse. As she turned her head the pursuer raised his hat. A moment later Lord Hepsford came alongside, dismounted, and with the rein over his arm walked beside her, toward the castle.

"What's the matter with you, Octavia? You are really just no good at all."

She raised her eyebrows in mock surprise. Then she smiled on him. "You don't mean that, Hepsey. What have I done now?"

"It's what you haven't done. You promised to meet us at Ritten's this morning."

Octavia halted. "I declare I forgot all about it! Oh, that's too bad! Really, honestly, I forgot it completely."

Closing her eyes for a moment to shut out the reproving face of the man before her, she saw herself comfortably seated in the embrasure of the great window, contented and happy, with a Western barbarian not far away, at work on his drawings. Opening her eyes and walking on, "I am very sorry. But it couldn't have made much difference with so large a party."

"Oh, rot! What's the use of talking that way? It just spoiled the whole thing—for me. And you know it."

"But Hepsey, you are not everybody."

"I am a thing to keep a promise with; unless your word is of no value."

"Oh, come now, that is very unkind! You know I always keep my word. On my honor I forgot it. Did you never forget an appointment?"

"Never when you were in it."

"Thanks! That's really very gallant."

"Gallant! Stuff! You know you are all the world

to me, and more, too; that I would do anything for you—and yet you are always treating me in some shabby way, as if I were a—a—"

"A what, Hepsey?"

"And don't call me Hepsey—at least before others."

"Why not, pray?"

"Because it sounds like Betsey, and that is why you do it."

Octavia laughed. "Well, perhaps it does. But Betsey is a good name."

"For a man?"

"Don't your men friends call you Hepsey?"

"Never."

"What do they call you?"

"Ned, of course. You know very well."

"Yes, but when you came into the title, and it's a fine old title, you know, and such a splendid estate, I thought Ned was too commonplace; that Hepsey was more dignified and impressive."

"Impressive! Why don't you call me 'Sally' and have done with it?"

"If you really object to Hepsey I must not use it. Perhaps Hepsford *is* more dignified."

"The name is yours, and whatever goes with it, if you will only take it."

"Yes, I know. You are very kind and I appreciate the compliment. But the price is too high."

"You have said that before."

"But you know I don't really mean it."

"Then why not take it? Think how happy it will make me and all our people, both yours and mine. And then, besides, you know, really, Octavia, I am not such an awful price. You have known me all your life. My one ambition would be to make you happy."

"Yes, I know that, Hepsey—I beg your pardon—I mean Ned. Suppose I call you Ned Hepsey."

"Oh, be serious!" And Lord Hepsford slapped the side of his leg impatiently with his stick. "You are a heartless brute, and that's all there is to it."

Octavia laid a hand on his arm and they stopped and stood facing each other. Although with a faint smile on her lips as she looked up at him, she said, in a more serious tone:

"I am sure you would try your best to make me happy, Ned. We know each other too well for any doubts on that score. That is, I know *you!* But you don't know *me.*"

"Stuff and rubbish!"

"No, not stuff and rubbish. A man never knows a woman. We do not know ourselves. But I am reasonably sure you are not the kind of man I ought to marry."

"Really? Am I too stupid, or vicious, or generally beastly, or what?"

"Not at all. There will be no better husband in England. And if your wife is not a happy woman it will be no fault of yours."

"Then stop your foolish talk, Octavia, and be the happy woman."

"No. Listen a moment. You think—or seem to think—that I am very clever and good—"

"I *know* it."

"—and a most perfect and desirable person in every way."

He nodded. "Indeed I do!"

"And you would look up to me and admire me—"

"I would."

"—and do whatever I said, and ask nothing better, as you always have done, since we were children."

"I would continue to do so as long as I lived."

"Well, do you know, dear Ned, that I am not at all clever, nor superior in any way? I have been making discoveries regarding myself. I am an ignorant, snobbish, prejudiced, narrow-minded, insular person, with a stupid British mind."

"Well, by Jove, your stupid British mind is good enough for me!"

"And I realize now—"

"Since when?"

"Well, it has come rather suddenly—during the last week or two. But I do realize, now, that the man I marry must be quite different. He must be much wiser than I am. He must have a broader, bigger mind than mine. More intellectual, Neddy, than either you or me; with fresher points of view. And he must be far more original, and quicker witted."

"Well, I'll be blowed! Where are you going to get this chap?"

"Instead of depending upon *my* wits and deferring to *my* judgment he must despise my mentality—politely of course—and ridicule all my silly ideas and erroneous beliefs. Moreover, he must have a livelier imagination than any of my present suitors, and quite a different sense of humor. Also, and this is important, he must *not* be a gentleman of leisure."

"Oh, let him be a gentleman!"

To Lord Hepsford she seemed more exalted and farther off than ever as she continued, with a new look in her eyes:

"He must have ambition and enthusiasm. He must be a worker; with a sincere contempt for all injustice and deceit, and for all social humbug; including the idle, pretentious classes who subsist on others and make no return."

"Hold on, Octavia! Just go slow for a minute. Are you an anarchist?"

She smiled. "No, nor even a socialist. I am merely developing."

"You never talked this way before. Where did you get all this stuff?"

A little color came into the lady's cheeks as she murmured. "Perhaps my mind is expanding."

"Don't let it—if it's going to make you despise all your old friends."

"Oh no! Never that!" and for a moment she laid a hand on his arm.

As they started on again toward the castle, Lord Hepsford remarked, after a pause, "I would like to give you a bit of advice."

"What is it?"

"When you find this thing you have just described, wash him and have his hair cut before you marry him. Even then he will be the most offensive prig in England."

Octavia laughed. "Very likely. Women's heroes are apt to be abnormities. I have probably overdone this one."

With an exclamation of disgust Lord Hepsford stopped short.

Octavia also stopped. "What is it?"

"There's that beast of a Mowbray. What in blankety is he doing here?"

"That is probably just what he is saying of you."

The subject of these remarks—a man in riding togs—had been leaning against one of the columns of the central porch of the castle. He now started forward to meet them. This person was the Hon. James Evelyn Mowbray, a clever young man with political aspirations. His wealth and family connections, together with his own talents, gave promise of an unusual future. It may have been the thought of these things that caused Lord Hepsford to mutter with a frown:

"Gad! It can't be Mowbray you have been describing!"

"No. Don't worry over Mr. Mowbray. Besides,

he could never develop into a nice, reliable anarchist."

During the next hour, Octavia, on the terrace with her two callers, became, at moments, gently astonished by her own state of mind. She made the curious discovery that these two men, instead of diverting her were merely creating a desire for another kind of conversation. And she realized, with a touch of mortification, that their earnest efforts to entertain her and to anticipate her wishes, were far less satisfying than the dissenting opinions and the friendly ridicule of the busy American in the far away corner of the castle. And, worst of all, this stranger had ended by addressing her in verse whose impertinent familiarity she would never have pardoned in either of the two gentlemen now present. And she knew that neither of these two gentlemen would dream of such presumption.

Yet she missed the presence of the sinner!

But Octavia was wise enough to suspect, in justice to the two gentlemen now present, that she was principally indebted to the American for what she had always needed and rarely enjoyed, a frank and unconventional intercourse with the outer world, with honest opinions from those who—apparently at least—had nothing to ask and nothing to fear. Nevertheless, she clearly recognized the necessity of discipline for the offending barbarian.

While at work among her flowers, the next morning, she looked occasionally toward the little doorway that led to the Garden of the Sleeping Beauty. But she resisted all temptation to enter. A morning to himself might do an architect good. It would be a lesson; and give him time to reflect. Even an American could not fail to perceive the meaning of her absence.

So during the next twenty-four hours she shunned the invader.

The following morning, however, she opened the little gate—or door—passed along the cloistered archway and stepped out into the neglected garden. The usual silence reigned. Before entering the Old Hall she stood for a moment surveying the weedy paths, the untrimmed box and the overgrown yew trees. It was, by rights, a melancholy little garden, but—how pleasant its memories!

Now, she must be severe and distant—even cruel perhaps—to maintain a decent dignity. This architect was to understand clearly that the present visit was purely architectural—merely to inspect the drawings of the castle.

Thus braced with firm resolve, she passed beneath the ancient portal. As she placed a foot upon the lowest of the five steps that led up to the door of the Old Hall she stopped, in surprise. The door was closed. Was this a hint? Had he the impertinence to be angry? Was he within? Was this door, in

her own castle, shut against her? In her cheeks she felt the tingling of a sudden indignation. While standing, for a brief moment, irresolute, her eyes were drawn to the one spot of light in the massive door. It was the key-hole, a yawning, ancient key-hole of three centuries ago. Between pride and curiosity she hesitated, then silently ascended the few stone steps, and peered within.

Such were the liberal dimensions of this orifice that nearly the whole interior of the Hall could be seen. And what she saw caused Octavia a peculiar sensation; unfamiliar, and disheartening.

The heavy table was still there, but nothing was on it. All the drawings were gone. And, as she listened, there was perfect silence.

Gently she tried the door, and found it locked. Then, after another look, she straightened up, and for a time, in this dimly lighted place, Octavia stood —and reflected.

Yes. He was gone. She had already guessed from the state of his drawings, together with a careless remark during her last visit, that he was lingering over work that was practically finished.

As she descended the steps and re-entered the old garden a frown had come into her face, with a tightening of the lips. And she walked more slowly than usual. This Ethan Lovejoy had come into her life—and gone out of it. The episode was finished. And it was a proper ending. If any man after committing such an impertinence—such an inexcusable

display of ill breeding—could run away when rebuked—why, then, his absence was not to be regretted.

And so, with a face of unwonted severity, she left the garden.

XVIII

THE PEARLY GATES

WHEN Auntie George, at lunch that day, asked Octavia if she were not feeling well, the niece replied less amiably than usual: "Of course I am! Why should you ask such a question?"

"Why, my dear, I merely noticed that you seemed to have no appetite."

"One cannot be always hungry." But a moment later Octavia apologized for her manner.

She dropped in upon Simeon Blake during the afternoon, to get the parasol whose handle he had been repairing. During their brief discourse she seemed to Simeon somewhat absent minded; particularly when she left the parasol and her purse upon his counter and started to walk away with Captain Hartley's briarwood pipe. And upon his calling attention to the error her ladyship seemed quite embarrassed.

From Simeon Blake Octavia returned to the motor and took therefrom a basket of hothouse grapes; then she walked down a side street, to the little house of Sally Pindar. Sally Pindar's mother,

sixteen years ago, was maid to Octavia's mother.

Sally, this afternoon, was lying upon a couch, with bandages around her neck and hands, suffering more from shock than from very serious burns. That the conversation should turn to her rescuer was not surprising.

"He lodged with us, as your ladyship knows, perhaps. He was always joking, and so very amusing in his exaggerated gratitude for any little service I rendered. He said, one day, 'If there is anything on earth I can do for you, tell me. If you are in fire or water just beckon, and I will come if I am alive.'"

Octavia smiled. "It was almost prophetic, wasn't it?"

"Yes, was it not! And after the fire, as I was lying here, he said to me in his joking way, 'Of course I climbed up. If you had not fainted you would surely have beckoned.'"

And Sally Pindar drew a long breath and laughed, a hysterical little laugh; and there were tears in her eyes.

Octavia also laughed, sympathetically.

After a pause Sally murmured, "Of course one can never repay such a deed. But I shall never forget. Already we miss him—very much."

"Has he left you?"

"Yes, very suddenly. He must have received bad news from home, for he packed up last night. And this morning he—he went."

Octavia stood up, then moved across the room and back again. Seating herself once more by the couch there was further conversation: but on other subjects. Then the visitor departed.

It seemed Fate had resolved that Octavia should be pursued that day—and overtaken—by memories of Ethan Lovejoy. After leaving Sally Pindar she discovered, on the main street of the village, the unmistakable little figure of Dr. Wherry, standing with folded arms in front of the ruins of the recent fire. This diminutive gentleman was somewhat peculiar in appearance. His large, square, well shaped head rested—with no neck to speak of—upon a pair of narrow shoulders. In former days his hair and eyebrows were a lively red. Now they were of varied tints, brown grey and a faded red with the grey predominating. A more benevolent face one seldom met, nor one wiser or more cheerful. Upon the blackened walls he was gazing in a brown study, so absorbed in his own thoughts that he failed to notice Octavia until she stood beside him. Then his face lit up and he shook her hand.

"How do you do? How do you do? Sorry to see you looking so well. Bad business for doctors."

"It's your own fault. You hardly ever come to see us."

"I like that! Lunched with you a week ago."

"Yes, but a week is a long absence from one's best friends."

"True, true! Right you are, Octavia. Your

heart's in the right place—so is mine. If we were alone in a dark corner, instead of out here in the street, I would let you embrace me. 'Pon my soul I would!"

From the very hour of Octavia's birth she and this little man had been warmest friends. As for comradeship and intimate knowledge of each other, Dr. Wherry was closer than her own father. Between them, forms and ceremony had never existed.

With a gesture toward the scene of disaster, he said, "I was trying to decide when you came along whether to be glad or sorry."

"Oh! You horrid man! Of course you are sorry! Didn't you love that old building?"

"I did. But when you interrupted us, Dr. Wherry and the horrid man were discussing whether the moral gain did not outweigh the material damage."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that the inhabitants of this village enjoyed an exhibition of moral and physical courage, of real heroism, such as they are not likely to see again. And I believe, that as an uplifter of standards it has done this little community more good than the further existence of the rickety old building."

"You mean the—the—"

"The rescue of Sally Pindar. Did you see it?"

Octavia nodded.

"Did you ever see anything finer?"

"No."

"Did you ever hear of a more quietly heroic deed, with no prospect of recompense?"

Octavia shook her head. "No, never."

"And when you saw him roasting at that burning window, still holding the burden—which one would naturally drop to save himself—didn't it make you a little thumpy about the heart?"

Again Octavia nodded.

"It was live or die together. And he meant to do it. That's what brought a lump in *my* throat. And I am gulping yet." The little figure straightened up and drew a long breath. "Gad! I have wanted to climb ladders ever since and do big things myself."

Octavia twined an arm in one of his. "You needn't feel badly about it. You have saved more lives than he has."

"Yes, but I haven't flung away my own life every time. That's the point. And the immortal glory of the whole business was that he didn't want to do it. Just before he went up he came and handed me his coat; asked me to answer a letter in the pocket if the ladder collapsed, and shook his head in a solemn way and said: 'The fool thing will never hold us both.'" And Dr. Wherry added, with an emphatic gesture, "As to courage, I consider that the real article."

"And he is such a modest chap too!" the little doctor went on. "Used to come to the house. Quite a character. Full of wisdom—also truth and nonsense. You would have liked him. But he has gone away, you know, for good."

"Yes—I—I—so Sally Pindar just said."

"Left very suddenly, poor boy! Some trouble, I fancy."

Then, as Dr. Wherry chanced to look up into Octavia's eyes he experienced a mild surprise. As these eyes now looked down into his own, earnestly as if demanding more, they spoke so plainly of distress, of something the lips refused to utter, that Dr. Wherry, who was not born yesterday—being sixty-nine years old—received a sudden illumination.

He backed away a step and frowned, as a stern parent. "Well, what is it? No secrets, now."

Octavia's eyebrows went up as in surprise. But color had come into her cheeks. "Secrets? Why, what do you mean?"

Dr. Wherry's frown grew sterner. After a moment's pause, he said: "I know something else about him too. Can you keep a secret?"

"Yes."

As he studied her face, his frown vanished, his eyes twinkled through his crooked—always crooked—spectacles. Then, tapping her arm with a forefinger he whispered: "So can I"; and he wheeled about and hurried away. After a dozen steps, however, he looked around over his shoulder, without stopping, and caught Octavia's offended eyes. With a wave of a hand and something that resembled a wink he raised his hat and was gone.

On reaching the castle Octavia went directly to her own chamber. Instead of removing her hat with the usual respect shown for that creation, she tossed it recklessly toward the bed. Missing the bed it fell to the floor. But she had already turned away and was confronting herself, unintentionally, in the cheval mirror. The face that returned her frown was evidently not inviting, for she wheeled about and moved toward the window. After standing for a moment looking out over the pleasant landscape—but seeing nothing—she obeyed, involuntarily, the mysterious impulse that so often moved her when the architect was in her thoughts. She turned her eyes to the empty wall space where the forgotten portrait once had hung. For a moment she tried, as she had tried many times before, to recall the departed face. At present, however, she was not in the mood to waste time on psychological puzzles. Turning impatiently away she threw herself into a chair.

Octavia believed that were she really the gardener's daughter, Ethan Lovejoy would still be here. She knew, and she struggled in vain to escape the knowledge, that his pride—of its kind—was as great as her own; that a fateful gulf existed between a snub, on equal terms, from a gardener's daughter and a snub from a daughter of the Earl of Drumworth.

In a colorless sunset the day was slowly fading. During the next hour, in the gathering gloom of her

chamber, Octavia, with folded hands, gazed out into the west.

At last, when the day was ended, with Octavia's head upon the pillow, her brain so persisted in vivid rehearsals of those mornings in the Baronial Hall that sleep was driven away. The clock upon her mantel struck one o'clock—and two o'clock—and her mind, now tired and feverish, was wandering, at intervals, to other worlds and spheres—everywhere except the land of Nod. Even the wind outside, as it moaned about the castle walls, seemed an element of her own spirit, as if wafting her away.

To rise in the air by a mere effort of will, and float like a bird high above the earth is enjoyable. And there is exaltation of spirit in feeling that you can soar to any height, and remain there, if desired. But to discover that you are soaring against your will, upward and forever upward, through clouds and mist and sunshine, turns joy to apprehension. And when Octavia, after a swift ascent, found herself before the gates of heaven, she was seriously displeased—and somewhat nervous. There sat St. Peter beside the entrance, with keys in his hand exactly as represented in a painting at the Vatican. In the lines of his mantle—as in the Vatican painting—there was dignity and repose.

As Octavia's arrival produced no impression she spoke, and told him politely she would like to enter. Turning his head and looking up, he raised his

bushy grey eyebrows as if in surprise. He inquired her name, which she gave him. Then he arose, and as he did so, his mantle seemed to shrink in an unnatural manner, and left him standing in a linen blouse such as French workmen wear, reaching nearly to his knees, and standing away from his body, like the skirt of a ballet-girl. His grey trousers were turned up at the ankles, showing dark blue socks dotted with yellow fleurs-de-lis. His shoes were of russet leather. "You cannot enter here," he said, "this heaven is only for Americans."

"Then where is the English heaven?" she asked: and to her surprise St. Peter shook his head, and told her, in a sneering manner, there was no English heaven. Octavia was indignant. And she protested. "It cannot be possible that only Americans have a heaven; that all other people are ignored, or forgotten!"

As she tried to speak rapidly and with emphasis she began to jumble her words—her voice growing fainter and fainter until she could say nothing, merely opening and shutting her mouth, no sound coming forth. She realized that she was a ridiculous spectacle. Her mortification increased when St. Peter, with a contemptuous smile, merely turned away. As he resumed his seat, his former mantle with its lines of dignity and repose, returned and folded naturally about him.

Again he resembled his portrait in the Vatican paintings. Octavia, in her voiceless agony, strug-

gling for speech, noticed the great wall before her had suddenly become transparent, as if built of glass; and she saw within, on the other side, long rows of draughtsmen reaching far away into space, all standing on stools, all whistling and beating time with T squares to their own music, which resembled the moaning of the wind. These figures were all alike, and every head was Abraham Lincoln's. Then, as she looked, they all straightened up, like one man. All turned toward her, and every face became the face of Ethan Lovejoy. Again and again she tried to call out to them, but in vain. The faces, for a moment, stared coldly at her, then with contemptuous indifference turned away and continued their whistling. But the whistling was low—and melancholy.

Again she approached St. Peter, and she saw that he also was at work on a drawing, a drawing of Drumworth Castle. But he motioned her away without even looking up.

At that moment came a ray of hope. Not two yards distant, passing before her as he approached the pearly gates, walked Baseborn! He walked with an air of confidence, head up, wagging his distorted tail.

Then Octavia, remembering his fidelity and his persistent, irrepressible adoration of herself, made a superhuman effort to recover her voice. This time she succeeded, and she cried aloud to Baseborn. But her heart became numb when, instead of a de-

lighted greeting, Baseborn, with the slightest turn of his head, regarded her for the briefest moment with unqualified disdain, and continued his progress. Then indeed she felt herself an isolated being, a thing apart, ignored, despised of all—to remain forever outside the walls, a wanderer in empty space.

Baseborn, after his one disdainful glance in which he clearly repudiated all acquaintance with her, approached the pearly gates. By unseen hands the gates were opened wide. And Baseborn in a flood of light, as an important personage, passed within. Strains of distant music, for a moment, reached Octavia's ears. This music bore a strange resemblance to the moaning of a tempest. The pearly gates again were closed, coming together with a startling noise.

So loud was this noise, so very real, that Octavia sat up in bed. Through the open window came a gust of wind. The casement, suddenly unfastened, had slammed against the wall.

XIX

A PAIR OF EYES

THE month of June and a part of July Octavia spent in London. During this visit, in the height of the season, a letter from her father came to Drumworth Castle.

MY DEAR AUNT: Your questions regarding Octavia are easily answered. She is in the best of spirits, having the gayest sort of a time. In fact I have never seen her soo full of life. Jolly, no end. Always on the go and can't get too much of it. I don't pretend to keep up with her. As to men, she has her pick of them. Should say the two slaves who had the inside track were Rutherton and a German prince. But she mustn't marry out of England. You needn't worry over that. Tell Dad the Admiral accepts his invitation and will turn up at Drum in August.

Yours affectionately,

ROBERT.

Late in July, about a week after Octavia's return, a conversation occurred in the library between Lady Georgiana and the old earl's fingers.

Said the lady, "I have never seen Octavia so vivacious and light hearted."

"Only at times," said the fingers. "There are

other moments when she is—different. Dull, silent. Something on her mind."

Auntie George shook her head. "That means nothing. Hers is a mercurial nature. She was always that way."

"But she doesn't look well," moved the fingers. "Hollow under the eyes. Color too delicate. Not so well as she ought to be."

"That's only fatigue after all her gaieties. She will pick up again, here in the country."

But the fingers disappeared into the earl's coat pocket, unconvinced.

Again, in August, also in October, conversations, substantially the same, were repeated, the grandfather still in doubt. For, Octavia being a changeable person by nature, habit and preference, was becoming more than ever a puzzle to her family. "What I don't understand," said the fingers, "is why, with such good spirits, she should get thin and nervous."

Although Auntie George still thought the grandfather overanxious she suggested that unless there was a change for the better they consult Dr. Wherry. There did come a change, but not for the better. It came early in November, and suddenly. It also came—so far as concerned the earl and Auntie George—mysteriously.

Great crises in life, those decisive moments that prove turning points in our careers, seem to prefer, as a rule, to meet us in a casual way when least ex-

pected. So it was with Octavia on a certain November afternoon when, with absent mind and languid step, she entered a familiar little room near the main hall of the castle.

During recent generations it had served as a coat-room. In earlier times her fighting ancestors had used it as an armory, for their axes, maces, swords and spears. And even at this late day one cross-bow, sole remnant of its departed brothers, still hangs upon the wall. In one corner is a small stone oven built for boiling water, melting lead or other deterrents for dropping on besiegers' heads. Three windows in a row, each just too narrow for an invader's entrance, look out upon the terrace. These windows existed a few centuries before the terrace was built. At present, however, in place of swords and spears and battle axes were less hostile weapons; canes, hats, umbrellas, caps and overcoats; waterproofs, overshoes, and various motor garments. It was here that Octavia had always kept her garden hat and basket, and the blue checked apron. As she was looking, this afternoon, in a dim corner for a certain mantle, her eyes were drawn to a piece of paper lying at the bottom of the garden basket. This basket had not been used since her last visit to the Old Hall, that final morning in the month of June. She took out the paper and unfolded it, then moved to the window for better light. When she saw its contents she started slightly, and the color came to her cheeks—then left

them, a trifle paler. She was reading Ethan Lovejoy's letter—the wretched verse from Pandora's box; the fateful lines that had put an end to her architectural mornings. Again she read them, slowly and in calmer spirit. Again, however, came a feeling of resentment at the words,

> "Just our Kosyie Benche with moonlight
> And a garden breathing kisses."

But now, six months later, the resentment at their familiarity was mingled with other emotions.

As her eyes rested upon the written words she began to notice, after the first surprise of her discovery, that the sheet of note-paper between her fingers was yellow with age: also that the ink had faded. She remembered now that when unfolding the note, months ago, she was struck by its apparent antiquity. Then, however, she believed this effect of age to be a part of Ethan Lovejoy's joke. But now, examining it more carefully, she found that one folding of the note still showed the stain and dust of long exposure; that certain portions of the paper were yellower than others, and that the ink was the peculiar color she had seen only in very old documents. And why should Ethan Lovejoy, she reasoned, even if he had found this ancient scrap of paper, why should he take such trouble with his ink? And even if his joke succeeded, what purpose in this imitation of an ancient writing? It

added nothing to the wit of the effusion. When, however, she read again these last words,

> From her False Poet but
> Trew Lovir,
> E. L.

there seemed a possibility that he wished to create an atmosphere in harmony with the old inscription of the lovers' bench.

Yet, in spite of all evidence to the contrary, she could not avoid the belief that in these words some mystery was hidden. She recalled the condition of a letter she had recently discovered, on the top of a picture frame in a disused chamber of the castle. This letter—from the Duke of Wellington to her great-grandfather—had lain there sixty years. Its yellow tinge and faded ink, its odor, its discolored edges and dusty top were exactly like this piece of paper in her hand. But Ethan Lovejoy's own initials at the end seemed to fix the authorship. To Octavia, in her present mood, even this was not conclusive. E and L might stand for many names besides Ethan Lovejoy.

Having doubts, she acted upon a sudden resolve. She would investigate Pandora's box. Important discoveries might result. Stranger things had happened.

Five minutes later, with the clumsy key of the Baronial Hall in her hand, she entered the Garden of the Sleeping Beauty. There, to her surprise,

she found the door of the Old Hall wide open. But the surprise was brief, for she remembered that this was Wednesday, the day when tourists were admitted to the castle.

Pausing in the doorway she surveyed, with melancholy eyes, the spacious, silent room, and she drifted back, in spirit, to those June mornings—the sunniest in her memory. For the morning sunshine could, as we know, flood the Old Hall through the lofty eastern window. But in the afternoon, when sunshine had departed for the day, there was a soberer light. The place became less radiant. The gloom in remoter corners and high up among the trusses of the open timbered roof grew solemn and mysterious. The armor and the weapons, the portraits and the banners, all assumed a graver, more serious air; more frowning and impressively historic.

Slowly along the Hall Octavia moved to the great window and dropped into her old seat. Then, with a sigh, she leaned back against the wall and closed her eyes. The silence invited dreams. Gone were the roses, the sunshine, the perfume from the old garden. There was no whistling, nor the humming of familiar airs; nor the click of a triangle against a T square. The drawings and the draughtsman, all had vanished. But, with closed eyes, she dreamed them back again. Even Baseborn she recalled, in spirit, and imagined him sitting on the floor in a bar of sunshine, staring up at her with his ugly, disreputable, adoring face. But these were

dreams. The silent Hall seemed a deserted playhouse, long after the play was finished; with the hero and the heroine but fading memories. And Octavia realized in the silence of this deserted place —this tomb of perfect days—the enduring influence in her own life of those hours with the vanished draughtsman. She could see, now, they had opened to her girlish vision a new horizon.

When she opened her eyes there were tears. And through the tears her eyes saw an unexpected thing. They encountered at her feet, and apparently in the flesh, what she had just been seeing in fancy—the figure of Baseborn! Surely it was the living Baseborn, with the same ugly visage, and the same adoring gaze. As their eyes met his tail began to wag. That he had followed her unobserved was, of course, the only explanation of his presence. Octavia might have reasoned that to a creature so supernaturally plain as Baseborn supernatural methods might be in order. With ears pricked up and head to one side, inquiringly, he ventured nearer. Her first impulse, stirred by memories he awakened, was to pat him, and be cordial. But with a second look into his shocking face she realized that he was too utterly plebeian for closer friendship. Anything like intimacy with a dog of such exterior was simply unthinkable. Baseborn himself seemed to read her thoughts. He paused. Anxiously he studied her face. If one could judge from the slower movement of his tail he divined her antipa-

thy. Into his honest, inquiring eyes came a look that went straight to Octavia's heart. She blushed —with shame. Then she stroked his vulgar head and spoke pleasant words. Had angels from heaven suddenly descended and crowned him with immortal glory his delight could not have been greater—nor so great, perhaps. Forward and back he bounced, emitting peculiar but ecstatic grunts. It seemed to Octavia that he might explode with gratitude.

But suddenly her attention was taken from the bouncing Baseborn. She straightened up and frowned. Voices from the garden reached her ears. She had forgotten the tourists. In another moment the unwelcome intruders would be here. At thought of meeting them she shuddered. Glancing swiftly about her in the forlorn hope of escape she made a decision. This decision, as it turned out, proved of some importance in Octavia's life. Had she decided otherwise—to return and meet the tourists—any further continuance of this history would be superfluous.

Along the length of the Hall she hurried. Toward the statue of Pandora, still holding her fateful, marble casket, she gave a passing glance.

Across the farther end of the Baronial Hall ran a heavily paneled oak partition. The upper panels in this partition were open, like a church screen, giving outlook from the gallery behind. Although Octavia had not visited this gallery in recent years

she remembered well the secret door that opened upon the narrow stairs. This door, the fourth panel from the left, was, in appearance, like all the others. Straight to this panel she hurried. She pushed a little iron button, partly hidden between two moldings. Easily the door opened. Base-born was, of course, close at her heels. With a rapid gesture she motioned him to enter. For a second he hesitated. Then, after a swift glance at her face to be sure that she was in earnest, he entered and bounded up the narrow stairs. She followed, but more slowly.

Since her last visit, a dozen years ago, this gallery, lighted by a row of narrow, Saxon windows, had become a refuge for discarded things. Scattered about were odd pieces of furniture: medieval chairs, a cabinet that had been in a fire, the remains of a chandelier, and an old spinet with shattered keyboard and tottery limbs. On the wall hung various paintings considered unworthy of a better position. Glancing carelessly at these banished works, generally portraits of discreditable ancestors—or of creditable ancestors badly done—Octavia's eyes, of a sudden, opened wider in astonishment. She stopped, and held her breath. Into her face came a startled look. A queer sensation, as if her brain were playing tricks, brought a tingling to the roots of her hair. For an instant—the briefest second—she thought she was looking into the living eyes of Ethan Lovejoy. Upon the wall in front of her,

on a level with her own face, hung a once familiar portrait. It was the portrait of a woman. But the eyes were exactly the eyes of the absent architect. No human resemblance could be closer—in color, in shape and in character: the same light grey with dark brows and lashes, the same friendly, sympathetic, kind expression. And even the curious little curves to the finely drawn eyebrows—an upward and then downward twist—even that was precisely similar: and it gave to both the faces—the living man and the canvas woman—an expression absolutely the same. This portrait in its oval frame had hung in Octavia's chamber until Auntie George came to live at the castle. It was one of the friends of her childhood. She had loved the face—the sympathizing grey eyes and the half suppressed smile. It was the missing portrait, and she had found it!

She remembered her grief at its departure. And she now recalled her incredulity when told by Auntie George that the person represented in the picture was of ignoble origin and unworthy a place among Drumworths.

But the face had remained in Octavia's memory as that of an intimate friend. Her faith had never wavered. Of all the canvas faces in Drumworth Castle—and there were hundreds—this had always been her favorite. So, it was now revealed to her why Ethan Lovejoy's eyes, from their first glance, had inspired her with confidence, with a sense of

friendship and of old acquaintance. Also, she knew now why her own eyes had been drawn so mysteriously and with such persistence toward the empty space upon her chamber wall.

From that empty space these eyes—his eyes—had for years looked serenely into her own, always with love and sympathy.

In silence Octavia stood, and gazed—and wondered. The lady's history she had never known, being too young to care.

Was this astonishing resemblance merely chance?

XX

OUT OF THE PAST

MEANWHILE, about a dozen tourists, guided by Bayliss, an old servant of the castle, had entered the Hall. After listening to a brief history of the room itself they turned from one spot to another, standing in attentive groups before a portrait, a banner or a man in armor, while Bayliss, stately, clean shaven, with impressive voice, poured forth a wondrous tale.

As for Bayliss, all history not connected with the House of Drumworth were as well unwritten. He had never bothered with it. He knew, of course, such chronicles might be of interest to certain foreigners. But serious history, that is, the celestial story of the House of Drumworth, flowed exultant from his lips, recounted with a reverent tongue.

Octavia looked absently through the screen, down upon the tourists. Her thoughts were with the portrait and the memories it had suddenly awakened. But she discovered, gradually, that her eyes were following, first carelessly, then with a livelier interest, the movements of one of the visitors. This visitor was a woman whose thin veil seemed to have

fallen as if by accident over her face. She was plump in figure—not stout, but pleasantly plump—and dressed in a dark blue traveling suit, of simple but stylish cut. She appeared to take little interest in what Bayliss had to say. From the other tourists she kept aloof, giving Octavia the impression of being either bored, or nervously impatient—or both. This visitor was to bring several surprises to Octavia that afternoon. The first was not long in coming.

When Bayliss, followed by his audience, moved away from this end of the hall, the lady in dark blue remained behind. And when all backs were turned she quietly pressed the hidden bolt and opened the panel through which Octavia herself had entered the gallery. Silently the little door was closed. Octavia, in amazement, held her breath. None of the tourists, nor Bayliss, had witnessed this sudden disappearance. From them the woman with the veil had quietly vanished, and none had missed her.

As for Octavia, so great was her wonder that she felt a sudden fear—a fear as of some suspicious action still to come, yet more amazing and improbable. Who could this stranger be—this casual tourist—familiar with the panel and its secret bolt? And for what conceivable purpose was she now hiding at the foot of the stair? Octavia's first impulse was to call out to Bayliss to return and open the door. But a glance at Baseborn restored her confidence. He, also, understood the situation. With

the faintest of growls he looked up into her face for orders. She laid a restraining hand on his plebeian but reassuring head, and waited. Bayliss and his followers passed out through the farther door. For a moment, in the great hall, there was silence: a silence so exciting to Octavia that it became almost unbearable. She heard, from the foot of the stair, the little door open, then the rustle of a skirt, then the gentle closing of the door. Looking through the screen she saw the woman walk rapidly across the hall to the statue of Pandora. And Octavia's eyes opened yet wider in astonishment as she saw the woman reach up and insert a hand in the marble casket. For an instant the fingers groped about as if in search of something. Then they drew forth a folded piece of paper. And it seemed to Octavia's straining, scarce believing eyes, like the note she herself had taken from the same casket six months before.

Across these incredulous eyes Octavia drew a hand as if to rouse herself from a dream. But her bewilderment was brief. When the lady walked rapidly to the great window, opened with quivering fingers this bit of paper and bent eagerly over it, then Octavia made a swift decision. She ran down the stairs, pushed open the panel and advanced toward this enigmatic being. The woman looked up in surprise, and took a backward step.

It was now late in the afternoon. The fading light from the great window fell softly upon the

visitor. Mysteriously she blended with the shadowy background of old portraits and suits of armor. Octavia found herself gazing into a face she had never seen before. It was an attractive face, sensitive, gentle, of peculiar beauty, wide across the forehead, and with a pointed chin. There were youthful contours of face and figure. But these might be deceptive. She could pass for either forty or sixty years of age.

As for Baseborn, he sniffed about the lady's skirts, tactfully, to give no offense. He found her more than satisfactory. Backing away a step or two he stood looking up into her face, wagging welcomes with his devious tail. But the lady ignored him. Baseborn was accustomed to being ignored—or worse—by respectable people, so he was neither surprised nor resentful.

Octavia, self forgetting, stood in silence. She looked earnestly into the lady's face as one who struggles with confusing thoughts. For, with disturbing power, came the consciousness of something surprisingly familiar in the peculiar, light grey eyes that met her own. The lady, with a slight tilting of the pointed, youthful chin, demanded quietly, but as one who politely resents an impertinence,

"Do you wish to speak with me?"

It was an unusual voice, smooth, low and most agreeable to the ear.

But even then Octavia did not answer. The more she studied this stranger's face, the more puz-

zling her memories, until, at last, she exclaimed in suppressed excitement,

"Ah, how stupid! I know you now! I know who you are!"

But the visitor was less elated. Politely but with obvious caution she inquired, "Do you? Who do you think I am?"

"I think you were my grandfather's second wife —the Countess of Drumworth."

The lady was plainly startled. She frowned involuntarily, and drew her lips together. Then, regarding her questioner with a certain reserve, yet not unamiably,

"Why do you think so?"

"Because your portrait and I were intimate friends—the very best of friends—for many years. It used to hang in my chamber, just opposite my bed."

She was about to mention its present unhonored exile, but refrained. Into the face of the older woman came a mirthless smile, a smile more sad than bitter, as she murmured,

"But that was years ago. It is not there now, I fancy."

"No; I just discovered it, up in that gallery. It disappeared when Auntie George came to live with us—after my mother's death."

"Your Auntie George! Yes, I can easily believe it!"

The tone in which this was uttered showed little enthusiasm for the person mentioned.

Octavia held forth a hand. "But you and I are friends, are we not?"

For an instant the visitor hesitated. Then she took the hand.

"And now," said Octavia, "you must forgive me if I ask an impertinent question."

The ex-Countess of Drumworth smiled. "If not *too* impertinent."

"Have you read the note you just took from Pandora's box?"

This question evidently caused surprise. "Yes, I have read it."

"Was it the one you expected?"

"How did—why should you suppose that I expected—anything?"

"Because I happened to be in that gallery up there and saw you walk straight to the box and take out the note as if you knew it was waiting for you."

There was a faint smile and a gentle shake of the head. "If I should consider your question impertinent what am I to do?"

"Oh, please don't think me impertinent! I am not asking what is in the note—merely if it is what you expected. For I, too, took a note from that box some months ago, and I can't help thinking there has been a mistake—of some kind."

"*You* took a note from Pandora's box!"

Octavia nodded and drew forth the fateful verse. The ex-countess bent eagerly forward looking

quickly from the paper in Octavia's fingers to the one in her own, then back again.

"May I read it?" she whispered.

Octavia smiled. "How impertinent we both are!"

"I beg your pardon. Here." And she unfolded her paper and gave it up.

Octavia, in exchange, delivered her own.

The two women, both turning slightly away—their backs to each other—read their respective notes. The one now in Octavia's possession proved whiter and fresher than the one she had relinquished. It was written in pencil. What she read was this:

To a Supercilious Angel, Sitting in a Window.

DEAR SAINT:

See the mountains kiss high heaven,
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother;
And the sunlight clasps the earth,
And the moonbeams kiss the sea,
What are all these kissings worth
If thou kiss not me?

Yours truly,
BASEBORN.

When Octavia had read this letter—this preposterous use of her beloved Shelley—she laughed. The laugh was hysterical, half-suppressed, but of joy at the knowledge of Ethan Lovejoy's escape from the charge against him. The laugh quickly ended, however, by a tightening of the throat as she recalled his punishment. With a hand pressed hard against

a cheek, her eyes staring blindly at the lines, came the bitter realization of his own inevitable opinion of herself, of her sudden change of manner—with his heartless dismissal. And all for this innocent bit of nonsense!

Looking down at Baseborn, whose counterfeit signature was on the note, she met the ever adoring eyes, gazing solemnly into her own. They offered sympathy, and were seeking truth. As usual, when honored by a glance, the ears moved up and the scrubby tail waved grateful recognition. She smiled and touched his head. Yes, at that moment she could have answered his poem with one of the kisses so glowingly invited—were he only a trifle less ugly. We all know individuals whose complete ugliness, from its very perfection, renders them objects of interest; an interest not enjoyed by persons more comely and more commonplace. Such an individual was Baseborn. However, it should be clearly understood, in justice to Octavia, that no discriminating person—even if well aware of Baseborn's moral worth—had ever been impelled to kiss him.

XXI

SUPPRESSED HISTORY

A SOUND from the window awakened Octavia from her dismal reflections. It was the sound of a sob, restrained, but distinct. She saw the visitor reading, over and over again, the missive between her fingers. And the present effect was far different from its effect upon the first recipient.

Octavia came over and stood beside the reader. A few words of tactful sympathy produced their inevitable effect upon a fellow-creature overwrought by emotion, unconsciously craving that very sympathy. The story of the note was briefly told by Octavia; of inserting her fingers in Pandora's box and drawing forth a communication quite different —as now divulged—from that intended by the sender. "But how does it happen," she asked, "that the initials E. L. on your note are the initials of the man who wrote this other note thirty years later and signed it Baseborn?"

"These are the initials of my husband, Ethan Lovejoy. And perhaps you can imagine my bewilderment just now when I opened the note I had

taken from Pandora's box and recognized my son's handwriting, written—so I believed—thirty-three years ago, before he was born. Yet it is clearly his handwriting."

"Oh, indeed you had cause for astonishment! And the surprise would have been greater still had you known Baseborn."

At this mention of his name Baseborn waved his tail. He looked earnestly from one face to the other with a dog's humble effort at comprehension.

The afternoon light in the Old Hall was now fading. When Octavia suggested that they go out into the garden the visitor at once consented. "Yes, there is a bench out there where we can sit."

"A cosy bench—for true lovers," and in saying it Octavia blushed—to her own mortification. The visitor raised her eyebrows, then smiled. "Ah, you know that inscription! Although hidden by vines."

"And you, too, seem to have found it," said Octavia.

Again they both smiled—discreetly.

Before the old stone seat they stood, for a moment, each reading the quaint inscription.

This kosyie Benche wth goode ronde
Moone speedeth trew Lovirs

After a silence the older woman spoke. "But this bench, with the pale roses above, has foreshadowed tragedy — for certain lovers. Anne

Boleyn sat here with her bloodthirsty Henry. And as perhaps you know, there is a letter of hers in the British Museum, written to the same gentleman, in which she mentions it."

"Mentions this very bench? Why, I never knew that!"

"This very bench; and the inscription, too."

"But why," exclaimed Octavia, "was I never told of that letter? I thought I knew every bit of Drumworth history."

"Because I discovered it myself, and never told the family."

"Why not?"

"I knew it would interest them. So I kept it to myself."

Octavia's face showed surprise, and reproach. But the honest eyes of her new acquaintance looked smilingly into her own. "That needs explanation, doesn't it? The Drumworth family at that time consisted of my husband, who was working hard to render me the most wretched wife in England, and of two sisters who gave him splendid support."

"Oh, no!"

"Oh, yes!" And Mrs. Lovejoy's smile grew fainter. "Incidentally they made it a principle to doubt whatever I said. So you see, as a matter of fact, there was no temptation to be talkative."

Although the lady spoke habitually in a somewhat playful manner, her speech was none the less convincing. For Octavia was discovering that this

mother, like her son, could hide inward grief by outward mirth.

They seated themselves upon the bench. It being a Kosyie Benche, especially constructed for "trew lovirs," the two ladies were somewhat close together. For a time they sat in silence.

The old garden, like the Hall, was less seductive of an afternoon. It missed the morning sunshine. But, unlike the Old Hall, it had, just at present, a rosy sky for roof. All about the place, among its dusky masses of box and yew, hovered the gentle melancholy that lingers in ancient gardens. Moreover, for both women, this garden had undying memories. And both women, for a time, found pleasure in its silence.

Mrs. Lovejoy, leaning back with hands folded in her lap, the long delayed note between her fingers, surveyed, with clouded eyes, the once familiar scene. At last she straightened up. "Of course I can guess at the sort of reputation I enjoy at Drumworth; that of a frivolous woman who ran away from a better husband than she deserved. To be expected, of course, when a gentleman of noble birth so far forgets himself as to marry a farmer's daughter. But there were circumstances which the husband's family have not shouted from the housetops: which you, probably, have never heard."

"I have heard very little," said Octavia. "And had I heard anything against you I should not have believed it. I loved your portrait. After my

mother's death your face became very dear to me."

Mrs. Lovejoy laid a plump, well gloved hand on one of Octavia's. "Thank you. You are a loyal friend—a true hearted, generous girl, as I have already heard. Our reputations, you see, are somewhat different. But to go on with my story, which must be short. Knowing your own people you can imagine with what joy and with what a hearty welcome a farmer's daughter was received into the Drumworth family, and especially by your two great aunts."

"Which aunts?"

"Your great aunts, Frances and Georgiana. Both were living at the castle when I came—and both kindly remained. Do you remember your Aunt Frances?"

"Yes, but not distinctly."

"Fortunate girl! Compared with Aunt Frances your Aunt Georgiana is a broad-minded, sympathetic, self-sacrificing democrat."

Octavia, knowing Auntie George, could not help smiling.

"So you can imagine the happy hours I passed here. Especially after your grandfather tired of me —within a year—and spent most of his time in London—with other ladies. And such ladies!"

"Really?"

"Such creatures were a revelation to me, being literally a village girl. I was fond of gaiety myself and inclined to be lively, but compared with

those ladies I was sanctimony itself. His behavior disgusted certain of his friends who told him what they thought. He became, among other things, so insanely jealous that I really feared for my safety."

"Oh!" And in this exclamation was a shade of doubt.

The visitor raised a finger to her face. "Do you see a scar just above the eye? That was made by the knuckles of your grandfather, my gentle husband."

Now Octavia was not ignorant of her grandfather's temper. And even had she been ignorant there was unmistakable truth in this woman's voice and tone and manner of speech. It was an honest tale, sincerely told, of a woman defending her own good name.

"Well, I will not bore you with any details of my year of married life here at the castle. I was young, simple and sensitive. The two aunts were older, more experienced and absolutely unfeeling. I know now, looking back upon it all, that it was their wish to drive me to some compromising act. No two women ever had an easier victim. What I endured in the way of snubs, humiliations and undisguised contempt—well, the wonder is that, having some pride of my own, I endured it at all. In the presence of visitors and before the servants I was cleverly and persistently mortified. For years afterward I would wake up in the night from a horrid dream in which I tried in vain to flee from

the faded, slow moving, contemptuous eyes of Aunt Frances, from her square, firm jaw—like your grandfather's—and the sneering mouth. And when this undisguised contempt of the aunts finally so affected my husband himself that he began to be ashamed of me and my origin I was really too unhappy to care what happened."

There was a pause. Octavia, as she looked into the speaker's gentle, cheerful face, could see traces of trouble and of suffering not entirely hidden by the present plumpness.

"I don't see how you bore it. And I will confess, as we are all in the family, that I can easily imagine what those aunts could do. Also, I know my grandfather."

Gently the visitor shook her head. "No. You only know him as a grandfather. And there can be a frightful difference between a grandfather and a husband: the difference between watching a shipwreck from the shore and being aboard. As a husband he was simply unspeakable. But I must get on with my story—my defense, I might say. One morning I went off to a corner of a garden merely to escape the aunts. I happened to notice in the wall a door that was new to me. I opened it, passed along the cloisters and came out into this garden. From that window above us, which was open, I heard the voice of a man, humming fragments of songs. I went in and found a man at a long table making drawings of the castle."

Octavia, in amazement, rose from her seat. Standing before Mrs. Lovejoy she looked down into her face with an expression that lady failed to comprehend. Somewhat taken aback by the suddenness of the movement she gazed inquiringly into Octavia's startled eyes. "What is it?"

"Why—you—what you have just told is my own experience—precisely! It is the way I came to know your son!"

"Really!"

"Yes; exactly the same. It seemed, when you were speaking, as if I were listening to an account of my own adventure."

"A curious coincidence, surely," murmured Mrs. Lovejoy. "But then, you know, we are told that history repeats itself. However, not very often in just that manner, I should say."

Octavia again took her seat upon the bench. "Excuse my interruption. It did seem so surprising and mysterious; almost unnatural. But please continue."

"Well, this draughtsman proved to be interesting; wise and witty, frank, cheerful, kind, sympathetic, full of fun, straightforward, high minded, in fact with all the qualities that I most love in a man. I came again the next day—and the next, and for several days. I used to sit in the window and watch him as he worked."

Again, involuntarily, Octavia straightened up. But with a smile and a nervous little laugh she

apologized. "I didn't mean to interrupt you. But I also used to sit in the window and watch your son as he worked."

"Indeed! The repetition does seem singular. However, there is really nothing astonishing, perhaps. One might call it the natural order of events from like conditions. But from this point our experiences probably bear no resemblance. After spending several mornings in this manner, and becoming more and more intimate, and with intoxicating speed—well—you can perhaps guess the result even if the little god has spared you."

As Octavia nodded assent there came a tingling in her cheeks. But Mrs. Lovejoy was unobservant. With a faint smile she gazed absently toward the tower of Drumworth church, now in the golden light from a setting sun.

"I found my draughtsman was an American—which, of course, was a blow. I had never seen an American and could hardly believe it when he told me. As a child I supposed all Americans wore feathers in their hair, waved hatchets, and uttered frightful war whoops. I learned better than that, of course, as I grew up. But I did know that they were all dyspeptic, flat chested and pale, and lived on nutmegs and green tea: that they were dishonest and terribly nervous—most of them with St. Vitus's dance. So you can imagine my surprise on finding that one of them, at least, was calm, deep-chested, full of fun, had a pleasant voice and not a single feather growing from his head."

Octavia smiled. "But not honest."

"Absurdly honest. So much honester than myself that I felt ashamed of my own instincts. Well, one summer evening I was sitting in the drawing room with the two sisters-in-law—Frances and Georgiana—both old enough to be my mother. My husband, you know, was more than twenty years older than I, and his sisters older than he. That evening I pretended to read, but was listening, as they knew I must, to their conversation. They were deploring the humiliation of a certain noble family whose son had become engaged to a person of ignoble birth—like mine. The comments, of course, were intended for me. My husband was alone in the library. After a while, with burning cheeks, I laid down my book and went out into the garden to cry by myself. I did not wish the two ladies to have the gratification of seeing my tears. Entirely by accident, and from an impulse of the moment, I kept on, through the cloisters into this old garden. To my surprise I found here—dreaming of myself he said—my draughtsman."

Mrs. Lovejoy leaned back and folded her hands in her lap. After a short silence she went on, but in a lower voice:

"Hopeless, helpless, weary of the struggle, crushed in spirit, I walked into his arms. The rest of the story you have probably heard."

"No, not a word of it. It has all been the darkest mystery. We know nothing whatever except

that my grandfather followed you out into the garden, returned alone an hour or so later and has been speechless ever since; that you disappeared completely and were never heard of afterwards."

Mrs. Lovejoy seemed surprised. "Has he never told his side of the story?"

"Not a word. And no one has dared ask him."

Mrs. Lovejoy smiled — somewhat scornfully. "His pride. Yes—his pride has kept him silent."

"Then you think he could speak if he wished?"

"Oh no! I did not mean that. I think he is voiceless—without the power of speech. The injury to his head accounts for that."

"Injury to his head?"

"Yes. I will tell you. After our meeting, after walking into a pair of arms—as I have said—Ethan Lovejoy and I sat upon this bench. It was paradise—after purgatory. The moon, that evening, and I shall never forget it—a great, round luminous ball—rose slowly from behind that church tower."

Baseborn, during this interview, had been lying a few feet away, near the basin of the waterless fountain. With chin on his front paws he assumed, according to the habit of dogs, a sleepy indifference to other people's doings. One eye, however, had now and then opened—also the custom of dogs—and had kept him informed as to the situation. Now he arose, slowly, and did a surprising

thing for so tactful a dog; a dog habitually considerate of other people's feelings. He approached the two ladies, stretched himself, and yawned. He yawned elaborately, making a peculiar noise in his throat. The noise had a human sound. Then he shook himself, sat down on his haunches and looked into the two faces, first of one lady then the other, with an expression which said clearer than words, "How much longer are you two things going to sit here?"

So unmistakable was this look that Mrs. Lovejoy responded: "Have patience, Mr. Baseborn. It is nearly finished."

Baseborn, by a movement of the tail, acknowledged the explanation.

"As we sat here, I happy, yet with a breaking heart, Ethan Lovejoy asked if I had taken my letter that afternoon from Pandora's box. You see, we used Pandora's box as a post office. I wished to run in and get the letter, but he held me back, saying it would keep until tomorrow."

Raising the paper in her hand, she added, "This is the letter. It has waited for me thirty-three years."

Octavia regarded this fateful bit of paper with a certain fear—and fascination. Innocent in itself, it had worked amazing evil before the final fulfilment of its mission.

"As we sat here, on this bench, watching the slowly rising moon we were, of course, very near

together—for that is the purpose of the bench. But brief indeed was our dream. A sudden sound on the gravel walk, of a footstep near us, brought a cruel awakening. Can I ever forget it? There, in the moonlight, stood my legal owner. Towering above us, he seemed a mile in height. My architect jumped to his feet. The two men faced each other. I also stood up. And I remember my knees could scarcely hold me as I leaned against the arm of the seat. For a moment there was a silence. Then the earl, his voice hoarse with rage, pointing back toward the archway said to me, 'Go!' But I did not move. My blood was frozen; my limbs too weak. He had nearly killed me once, and I could guess at my future. 'Go,' he repeated. But I could only shrink back, closer against the wall. Then, in his fury—did you ever see him, by the way, on one of those occasions—in one of his rages?"

Octavia closed her eyes, tightened her lips, and nodded.

"Then you can understand my terror."

"Indeed I can!"

"Well, he brought his hand down upon my head with awful force and clutched my hair. After that things happened as in a dream. With all his strength he dragged me toward him and I fell to the ground, on my face. For a moment I lay there, stunned. It was only for an instant. But during that instant things had happened to the earl. As I tried to get up I saw him lying on the ground, his head against

the pedestal of that dancing cupid. I can see him now, when I close my eyes—his white face in the moonlight.

"As Ethan Lovejoy picked me up and asked if I were hurt I could not take my eyes from the figure on the ground, at the foot of the statue. He lay as if dead. We helped him to his feet, then onto this bench. He sat staring from one of us to the other, his lips moving as if cursing us. But there was no sound. He was trying, in a crazy way, to talk. With the moon shining full in his face he had a ghastly pallor. His white lips worked and quivered in that horrid silence—oh! I can see him now! I shall never forget it!"

Mrs. Lovejoy put a hand to her face and leaned back for a moment.

Octavia's eyes, during this story, never left the speaker. So this was the explanation of her grandfather's eternal silence!

"I suppose you know," she said gently, "that he has never spoken since."

"Yes. I heard so, years afterward. How long he sat on the bench here I don't know. It might have been an hour. At last he was able to stand, still working his lips—and his clenched fist. I think his mind was wandering. He seemed almost paralyzed with rage. It was terrible—horrible!—and all the more terrifying from the unaccountable silence.

"At last, when he found he could stand alone, he backed away, through the arch, his walk un-

steady, like a man who had been drinking. Then came, for us, a sudden resolve. Most emphatic, and to me convincing, were Ethan Lovejoy's protestations against my remaining with such a husband. Of course he was not disinterested, but he spoke truly when he said my life would not be safe. And you know the rest."

XXII

IF

NO. I do not know the rest. Please go on."

"The rest is commonplace. We were married as soon as I could get a divorce from your grandfather, and we lived happily ever after."

"Oh, I am so glad! So glad Mr. Lovejoy was good to you!"

"Good to me! He was an angel. He never did an unkind thing in his life. Had he tried I am sure he would have failed."

She pointed to the door in the wall at the end of the garden. "We went out by that passage, floated down the river in the little ferry boat, then took a steamer for America, the land of sunshine. For me it was a new life, of peace and harmony, of love and devotion: with a home really my own. Instead of a splendid castle it was a little wooden house—commonplace and modest. But, oh, the difference! And you see for yourself, my dear, in this fat old woman, how well it has agreed with me."

"Fat! You are just right in every way. For me

you will always remain the dearest friend of my childhood. Never shall I forget the kind eyes that used to look down from my chamber wall. And I am so glad, so very glad, that your life has been happy." Then, after a pause, she added, "And being a mother you think your son is also perfect."

"Yes. Being absolutely impartial I am sure of it. He is just like his father, only more so."

"Then he is more than perfect!"

Mrs. Lovejoy smiled. "Well, not offensively perfect. But he is honest and brave. He is clever, and strong, and modest, and generous and reliable; and always cheerful. No human being could have a kinder heart."

Octavia shook her head. "What splendid things men are—if mothers tell the truth!"

"Did you see much of my boy when he was here?"

"Er—yes—several times."

"Do you know him well?"

"I don't know. Why—yes—I knew him pretty well."

"And don't you like him, just a little?"

Octavia lowered her eyes, and gently scraped the gravel with a foot. "Yes—perhaps—just a little. But he has his faults, you know."

"No. Not a fault!"

"Oh yes! Quite a number. He can be very impertinent and irritating. He is too socialistic, and lacks respect for—for a great many—excellent

things. And he whistles. In fact his manners are quite bad."

"Oh, never!"

"Yes, quite bad, at times."

The mother laughed, and rose from the seat. "Well, I should like to tell him what you say, although of course I don't believe it. But men are apt to be conceited and it might do him good."

"And I wish," said Octavia, her eyes still on the ground, "that you would also tell him about this mistake in the two notes. And that—that—I, of course, should not have been at all offended had I known the truth. I was really quite rude to him and very unjust—as I now realize."

There being no reply to this request Octavia looked up. She saw Mrs. Lovejoy with a more serious face looking far away, beyond the garden, over the distant meadows.

Octavia spoke again. "Would you mind telling him this?"

With eyes still over the meadows Mrs. Lovejoy answered, "Is it important?"

"Why—no: perhaps not." And Octavia, embarrassed and somewhat surprised, also stood up. Whereupon her companion turned and laid a hand upon her arm.

"Forgive me if I seem disobliging. But I do not wish him to know that I have been here. He knows nothing of my running away from that first husband. His father and I decided, years ago, that it

might be better for the child, and for us, if he were never told."

"But why not? If he knew the reasons he would surely understand, and think no less of you."

"Possibly. But a scandal's a scandal. And it's a difficult thing to explain to a son who believes his mother above reproach."

"He would still think so. He is not a fool."

"No; not a fool. But men are peculiar. One never can tell what a man will do next; nor what he may think. But tell me the truth. Let us be frank with each other. You can trust me, as I am trusting you. Is it important—that I explain to him about the notes? Do you seriously wish it?"

This time, as Octavia met the earnest, searching but friendly gaze of the familiar eyes, her effort to hide embarrassment was an open failure. Her blushes betrayed her. With a frown of vexation she drew back a step, mortified at her own confusion.

Gently Mrs. Lovejoy laughed. "You have answered. I shall give your message. I will tell him that I came here among other tourists to visit the castle and that I met you incidentally—which is, of course, the simple truth. And I give you my word of honor that I will say nothing which you would not approve. And I may trust you, may I not, to keep my own secret?"

"Yes. I promise."

"Then let us be happy again and forget certain

husbands—and grandfathers, and other unpleasant things. Come. I must be going."

So saying, she put an arm around Octavia's waist and they started along the weed grown, gravel path toward the little door at the end of the garden. Five minutes later the two women stood in the narrow archway, hand in hand, with final words of parting.

"Won't you change your mind," said Octavia, "and let me take you to the station in the motor?"

"Not for worlds! What a jolly meeting it would be if I encountered the Earl of Drumworth on the terrace, in the hall, or at the front door—or anywhere else! It would be deliberate murder on my part, for he would die of rage."

"But the station is a mile away, as of course you know."

"What's a mile to a young thing of fifty-four? And besides, walking reduces weight."

A few more parting words; then Octavia stood for a moment watching this new friend who went her way with a quick, firm step, as one familiar with the path.

In front of the Pindar cottage Mrs. Lovejoy looked at her watch. Then, along the narrow brick path, she crossed the garden and knocked at the open door. Nobody answered. She went in. Through the cottage she saw a woman in the garden beyond. It was Mrs. Pindar, who turned about at the visitor's approach.

Mrs. Pindar, in thirty-three years, had grown

stouter. So also had the visitor. And Time, rarely considerate, had wrought other changes.

"Pindar! I am so glad to see you!" And Mrs. Lovejoy held out a hand.

Mrs. Pindar took the hand. After an earnest look into the visitor's eyes her face brightened, and she curtsied.

"Most welcome, your ladyship! It's many weeks since you left us."

"Many *weeks!* I should say so!"

"But your room is all ready."

"My room? What do you mean, Pindar?"

"The same room you had before. Upstairs."

"Here?"

"Of course! Where else? And the razors are there: all safe."

"Razors!"

"Yes indeed! The razors you forgot when you left so suddenly."

Mrs. Lovejoy frowned. There was no doubt that she had left Drumworth suddenly—nothing could be more sudden—but this manner of recalling it was not tactful; especially in the presence of others. For behind Mrs. Pindar, on a circular bench around a tree, sat a woman, sewing. Mrs. Pindar noticed the look of annoyance.

"Never mind! Never mind! We have not used them. Besides, we don't mind tobacco." Then she suddenly whispered, "Clothes matter little—man or woman. Your secret is safe."

Mrs. Lovejoy, sorely puzzled, took a step or two backward. But Mrs. Pindar, with a friendly smile, and in a playful manner, shook a finger.

"'Tis not your ladyship that carries your shoes in your hand to save wearing them out. No, no! I remember now. It's the Beechwood sisters. The two old maids who cheat the grocer."

At this point Sally Pindar laid down her sewing, and came forward. She touched her own forehead in a manner to indicate that Mrs. Pindar's mind was not in perfect order.

"Mamma is misled, I think, by a resemblance. We had a lodger, a year ago, whose eyes were—something like yours."

"Exactly the same," said Mrs. Pindar. "Same eyes. Same man or woman. But the clothes are better. Yes, yes! More ladylike. But not coffee in church. Never that!" And with another curtsy she walked away into the cottage.

"Then you are Mrs. Pindar's daughter?"

"Yes."

"I am sorry, so very sorry, that her mind is affected."

"It has been this way for a dozen years. Did you wish to see her about anything in which I could take her place?"

"No, no. Nothing important. Just a friendly call. I used to know her, years ago."

"Would you mind telling me your name?"

Believing the name could have no significance to this girl she answered:

"Merely an old acquaintance; Mrs. Lovejoy."

"Lovejoy!" And Sally Pindar's face shone with a new light. "Oh, I know now from your eyes! Ethan Lovejoy is your brother."

"Brother! Oh, you flatterer! He is my son, such as he is."

"Such as he is! Why, he is perfect. So kind, and honest, and brave! He saved my life—at the risk of his own!"

"Did he? I don't know your name—"

"Sally Pindar."

"He did a good deed, Sally Pindar. The time was well spent. Whoever feels that way about my son has a permanent place in my heart." As she spoke she took the girl's hand.

Sally's eyes had become moist, and she seemed to swallow something before she could speak. "Will you please give him a message from me?"

Mrs. Lovejoy's eyebrows went up. "What! Another woman with a message? Yes, of course. What is the message? I will give it with pleasure."

"When he went away—and he went quite unexpectedly, in a great hurry—he left money to a dog."

"To a dog!"

"Yes. A homeless dog he had adopted. And he gave the money to me. But I never see the dog. He lives at the castle stables, where they like him and treat him well. So, will you please ask him what I shall do with the money? Or shall I give it to you?"

"How much was it?"

"Five pounds."

"Better keep it. The beneficiary might need it later. Are you speaking of Baseborn?"

"Yes. Do you know Baseborn?"

"I met the gentleman this afternoon. He may be good, but—" and Mrs. Lovejoy with a solemn face slowly shook her head.

Sally Pindar laughed. "No, he is not beautiful. But your son liked him."

"My son could like almost anything on four legs. This Baseborn may be a scheming villain—some devil thinly disguised. He certainly has the appearance of a perfect ruffian."

Again Sally Pindar laughed. "But he is really very amiable, and honest."

Mrs. Lovejoy took out her watch. "Dear me! I've not a minute to lose! Good-bye, Sally Pindar. And say good-bye for me to your mother."

Sally grasped the extended hand. "And please tell your son that I shall never forget what he did for me. And also please tell him about Baseborn. They were very close friends."

Mrs. Lovejoy promised, then hurried away. Within the doorway of the cottage she stopped, turned about and said:

"You may see me again."

Then, the next moment, Sally heard the little front gate as it closed.

And the unexpected visitor was gone.

When the daughter of the castle had closed the creaking old door behind the departing visitor she moved slowly, in deepest meditation, through the silent garden, and along the cloistered arches—still thinking. Midway along these cloistered arches she stopped abruptly. With a chilling thought came a sudden pallor, followed by burning cheeks. Fiercely against the burning cheeks she pressed her hands. What if this mother—and what more natural than for a mother to do it?—what if this mother should deliver the message with a warmer coloring, and to a son whose interest had waned!

Hot with shame, angry with herself, all her Drumworth pride in passionate revolt, affronted yet helpless, it seemed as if she were drinking to its very dregs, the cup of humiliation. All that a sensitive being may suffer beneath a blow that crushes pride—in this case the extravagant, over-cultivated pride of an exalted spirit—Octavia was now enduring. And Ethan Lovejoy might, perhaps, explain the trivial episode to his mother—and also, perhaps, feel a gentle pity for the sender of the message! Never before had her sense of shame been so unbearable—so bitterly mortifying. For a moment she almost hated the man and his mother.

When she started on again her brain seemed dull, —a trifle dizzy. And her limbs were weaker. More mindful of her steps than usual she moved slowly along the terrace, into the castle, and up the great staircase. On the landing she met her grandfather,

who was starting for London. With Mrs. Lovejoy's story fresh in her mind, she drew back, a very little, and looked into the old gentleman's face with a new but less confiding interest. The cold blue eyes seemed colder than before she heard his second wife's story. She noticed now, for the first time in her life, that the white mustache failed to hide the straight, hard line of the mouth; an idle mouth the last thirty-three years, save when eating and drinking. She also noticed, but not for the first time, the pugnacity and iron will of his bony, heavy chin. And she recalled Ethan Lovejoy's question in the Old Hall when he discovered the portrait: "Who is the tough looking chap with the jaw?"

The grandfather in turn seemed struck by something unusual in her own face. As he stopped before her on the landing, the chilling eyes looked searchingly into her own. His right hand came up, and the fingers inquired:

"Not feeling well?"

"Yes, well enough."

"Very tired?"

"Just a little tired."

"Rest. Don't go down to dinner."

Octavia obeyed, willingly.

Entering the library the earl tapped Auntie George's arm to secure attention.

"Dark lines again under Octavia's eyes. Seemed really weak as she climbed upstairs."

"I don't understand it. She has been at home

long enough to rest up after the season's fatigue."

The fingers moved more nervously. "You realize what it means if she isn't well enough to marry, and marry well."

"Yes. Indeed I do!" And the lady's chin rose slightly as she added, "It must be an old title."

"Or new money—if plenty of it," jerked the fingers.

"You don't mean that you or Robert would ever allow Octavia to marry beneath her!"

The old fingers almost laughed. "If he's rich enough." And while Auntie George was trying to frame a sentence that might convey some idea of her abhorrence the fingers added: "As soon as she is well enough I shall have a serious talk with her."

Then they moved away. Five minutes later they were on their way to the station.

In the train to London, that afternoon, the Earl of Drumworth had a singular experience. Between Reading and Windsor he was dozing peacefully when a woman's voice from the seat directly opposite, her knees almost touching his own, awakened with a sudden shock his slumbering senses. The voice, to him, was unlike all other voices. Not heard in thirty years it came as from the grave. But it was unchanged; smooth, melodious, pleasant to the ear. Now, it had merely answered, in the fewest words, a commonplace question from another traveler. But the memories it aroused were memories

of hated things, deep buried and accursed. For an instant the Earl of Drumworth, startled as in a ghostly dream, dared not look in that direction. His heart beat faster, his hands trembled. When his eyes opened he was prepared to see—yet not believing it possible—the girl as he remembered her; a timid, slender bride.

What he really saw, however, was a woman in dark blue, middle aged, and plump. Through the veil that covered her face he could distinguish nothing. But he pictured in his mind the features—fat and commonplace. With a frown and a twitching of the lips he sank lower in his corner, and closed his eyes.

But the businesslike talk with Octavia never took place. A week went by, and it was evident, even to the grandfather, that she was in no condition for that sort of interview. Then a month went by, followed by other months in which even Dr. Wherry was unable to explain things.

When a patient loses strength and color, without an ache or pain; eats little and complains less; laughs and jokes, refusing to be serious, then, indeed, the wisest doctor is no better than an engineer, a lawyer or an architect.

XXIII

ANOTHER JUNE MORNING

IN the Garden of the Sleeping Beauty, now long deserted, there is silence. Above the old stone seat the ivy reaches forth its tendrils as if to hide again the inscription proclaiming in time-stained letters,

This kosyie, Benche wth goode ronde
Moone speedeth trew Lovirs

And higher up, near the great window, the roses of Anne Boleyn, pale, disconsolate, saddened by tragic memories, yield their timid fragrance.

Upon the walls of Drumworth Castle one passing year makes faint impression. The vines, in places, creep a foot or two higher. Certain stones of a neglected tower may become, perhaps, imperceptibly looser. But from one June to another these changes are unnoticed. Its foundations are as solid, its walls as high, as they were five centuries ago. And it smiles in sunshine or frowns in storm, with all its youthful disdain, upon the surrounding country. Judging from appearances it ignores Father Time.

Not so its perishable owners. With this coming of another June a change was visible. In Octavia's chamber the eyes that were gazing through the mullioned window over the meadows to the south, shone from an altered face—a face with paler cheeks. And the face showed even greater weariness than the fragile figure in the easy chair.

Octavia was alone. Her maid had gone to the distant kitchen to carry out the doctors' orders. The doctors themselves had just departed. Outside her door, but so far away their voices could not reach her, they were holding, with serious faces and in lowered tones, a consultation. One of these physicians was Dr. Wherry; the other an eminent authority in nervous diseases. He had arrived this morning—two hours ago—from London. There was some difference of opinion as to the causes of the patient's decline, but they agreed in this, that their diagnosis was a guess. These physicians—both elderly men—had met similar cases. And the results, with rare exceptions, had always been the same. Their present duty was merely to render their verdict to the family without causing alarm.

As they stood at the head of the great staircase they noticed, carelessly, a girl who tiptoed past them. She was moving toward the chamber they had just left. After a timid knock she entered, timidly, and as timidly closed the door. Then she advanced, always timidly, toward the invalid.

Octavia, without moving her head from the high

backed chair, slowly turned her eyes—eyes which nothing seemed to interest—toward this visitor.

"Good morning, Lucy."

"Good morning, your ladyship."

Lucy Lake, the daughter of the laundress, was seventeen years of age. Her cheeks were round and red. Her mouth, also round and red, was very short. But her eyes, wide open, brown eyes, were larger than her mouth and surpassingly honest. So wide was the face and so thin the girlish neck that the effect was almost comical.

In the middle of the chamber the maiden halted.

In sincerest sorrow she gazed upon the lady in the chair. This manner of administering sympathy is always trying for the victim. But this victim smiled, and inquired, in the gentlest of voices:

"What is it, Lucy?"

Then into the pale face of the invalid came a look of surprise as the hand at Lucy's back moved forward from its hiding and held forth a rose—one of the rare, unattainable, pink and white, melancholy roses of Anne Boleyn!

Octavia blinked—and looked again. Lucy Lake stepped nearer and presented it. Octavia took the rose and inhaled its faint perfume—the sad little fragrance of the saddest of flowers. And it seemed to Lucy Lake that the pink of the rose was reflected in the lady's cheeks.

After a silence came a question, but in a voice so low that it barely carried. "Where did you get it?"

"Does your ladyship remember the old garden away at the end of—"

"Yes, I remember."

"A gentleman out there just gave it to me."

"What gentleman?"

"I don't know."

With a faint movement of impatience, "How does he look?"

"He is tall, your ladyship. In grey clothes. Not very handsome."

"He didn't give his name?"

"No, your ladyship."

For a moment the invalid, with half shut eyes, seemed lost in reflection as she breathed the fragrance of the rose. At last, with an effort, she turned in her chair and pointed to a portrait on the wall. It was the portrait of the Countess of Drumworth that had been occupying this, its original position, since last November—since Octavia discovered it among other exiles in the gallery of the Old Hall.

"Do you see that lady—in the oval frame?"

"Yes, your ladyship."

"Does she resemble, in any way, this man in the old garden? Step nearer."

Lucy stepped nearer. "No, your ladyship. I should not—why, yes! The eyes may be alike, mayn't they?"

"Is he short and rather fat?"

"No, your ladyship. He is tall and bony like."

The pale lady sank back among her cushions. 'A's

she turned her eyes toward the window, she inquired carelessly,

"How did you happen to meet him? Were you in the old garden when he came there?"

"No, your ladyship. I came over in the ferry boat, and he was in the boat, too."

"Well, go on."

Lucy Lake cleared her throat. "As I was walking up the path to the castle, he was walking behind and he stopped me and asked if I belonged to the castle. I said I did. Then he asked me if I saw your ladyship sometimes. I said I did. Then he took a card from his pocket and felt in another pocket for a pencil. Then in all his pockets. But he couldn't find one. He asked me if I had a pencil. I said no. Then he seemed angry."

"Angry with you?"

"Oh, no! Not angry with me. Angry with himself, I should think. He said things."

"What did he say?"

"I didn't hear, your ladyship. They were mutterings. Just a word or two. But very cross."

"Go on."

"But I think an idea came to him. He seemed pleasanter, of a sudden. He told me to follow him, and he started up the little path toward the east end of the castle, toward that old garden. Does your ladyship remember the heavy door that leads into that garden from the riverside? Where the stone steps—"

"Yes, I remember."

"Well, he—he did a suspicious thing."

"Suspicious?"

"Yes, your ladyship. He picked up a thin strip of iron hidden in the bushes beside the step, and stuck it in the key-hole and opened the door—just as a thief would!"

Lucy waited a moment, expecting some comment on an act of this nature. But her ladyship, leaning back among the cushions of the easy chair, held the rose to her nostrils and said nothing. In her eyes was an expression that Lucy Lake did not quite understand. It seemed almost mirthful.

"Go on. He's an American. Perhaps they all pick locks."

"But I didn't quite fancy it. If he could open that door he might open any door in the whole castle."

"Has he a thievish face?"

"Oh, no! He is not handsome, but I liked his face—until he picked the lock."

"If he is really a thief, Lucy, he would not pick the lock when others are watching. What did he do next?"

"When the door was opened he motioned for me to go in. I was a bit frightened, he being a strange man. But I thought there was no more danger in the castle than out. So I went in."

"Yes. And then what?"

"When I was in he shut the door. Then I was

really frightened, for he did a crazy thing. I thought he must be demented. Against the wall of the Old Hall is a stone bench with an arm at each—"

"Yes, I know the bench."

"As he walked toward that bench he took off his hat and coat and laid them on one of the arms. Then he stepped up onto the seat, then onto the other arm. Then he reached up to a molding that—"

"Yes, I know."

"He put one foot, higher up, on a carved stone, that sticks out just—"

"Yes, I remember."

"Then he reached way up, higher still, and pulled himself up and up until he could almost reach a rose. Those roses, like the one in your ladyship's hand only grow high up on the wall above the—"

"Yes, I know. He finally picked one?"

"Yes, your ladyship. The one in your hand. I was afraid he would fall and hurt himself. But he got down safely. I think he is out of his head a little."

"Why do you think that, Lucy?"

"Because the old garden has lots of flowers all prettier than this one, and much safer to pick."

Octavia closed her eyes and answered softly, "Perhaps he had some reason of his own for preferring one of these."

"What reason could he have, your ladyship?"

"I couldn't say. Then he handed you the rose?"

"Yes, your ladyship."

"What did he say?"

"He asked me to give it to you."

"Tell me just what he said."

"He said—" Lucy Lake spoke slowly, with evident desire to tell nothing but the truth—" 'Give this to Lady Octavia and ask her—if I can—if it is possible for me to speak to her—or with her—I forget which.' "

"Then you came away?"

"No, your ladyship. He gave me this." And Lucy held up a golden coin. "He said, 'Come back here and tell me just what she says and does and how she looks and everything that happens.' "

The lady's eyebrows went up. "He said that, did he?"

Lucy Lake nodded. "And he also said for me to come back to him at once."

"There is no hurry."

"But, your ladyship, he thinks there is."

"He is mistaken."

"But he is waiting in the old garden. He is walking up and down, most impatient and anxious like."

"How do you know?"

"I looked back as I left the garden, and saw him. He had begun already to walk up and down, doing his hands."

"Doing his hands?"

"I mean striking the inside of one hand with the

fist of the other. He was—he was—fussed up like. I am sure he is in a hurry."

"He can wait. And when you go back to him you must not tell him of all my questions."

"But he may ask me." And Lucy looked down upon the gold piece in her hand. Octavia realized, with a sudden fear, that the girl felt it her duty to give him his money's worth.

For a moment she studied the ambassadress. The illuminating quality of this almost comic face was honesty—unswerving and incorruptible. Even as a child Lucy had enjoyed the reputation of being needlessly veracious. She was startlingly truthful. So astonishingly frank that she had always been a source of embarrassment—sometimes of danger—to her more diplomatic friends. She was a victim to that misdirected sense of duty known in America as a New England conscience. Octavia had known her from infancy, and now into the lady's voice came a note of alarm. "Of course you must tell him the truth, Lucy, but it is needless to tell him everything. Now take this rose and hand it to me again."

Lucy obeyed.

"Tell him I took it, held it to my face an instant, like this, inquired who sent it, then laid it in my lap—as you see I do—and that I told you to thank him for it. Also tell him that I say he may call tomorrow afternoon at five o'clock; that I will see him if I am strong enough. You can tell him mere-

ly that and nothing more, yet still be perfectly truthful. Can you not?"

"Yes, your ladyship."

"Hand me a book." And Octavia pointed to a neighboring table.

Lucy took up a book, read the title, then laid it down again.

"Oh, any book will do," said Octavia.

Lucy brought the book and placed it in the outstretched hand.

"Tell him," continued the invalid, "that I then took my book—as I do—and went on with my reading."

"Yes, your ladyship."

"Now, you are sure you understand?"

"Yes, your ladyship."

"Very well. Now go to him, and be sure and tell him only this last part of our interview."

As the ambassadress turned away Octavia added, as an unimportant afterthought, "You might come back and let me know what happens."

"Yes, your ladyship."

"But don't tell him I told you to."

"No, your ladyship."

The envoy curtsied, solemnly, and departed.

XXIV

A DIPLOMATIC INCIDENT

ANOTHER five minutes; and Lucy Lake entered the old garden.

The deranged person was still pacing the gravel walk, to and fro in front of the stone seat, as she had left him half an hour ago.

The brown leather cap, pushed back on his head, allowed a clearer view of his mud stained face. And such a face was one more proof, in Lucy's eyes, of a disordered brain within. For this person seemed strangely unconventional: and to be unconventional was, with Lucy Lake, the clearest indication of an unsound mind. Moreover, although his face and his clothes were wet, he seemed unconscious of the drizzling rain. Any stranger who with muddy clothes and dirty face could wish to make a formal call on such a person as the Lady Octavia must indeed be flighty.

The prospect of an interview with this crack-brained gentleman off here in the deserted garden was disquieting. But Lucy was ready to face any danger for her idolized mistress. Besides, the Lady Octavia herself did not consider him unsafe.

As the ambassadress appeared, the face of the lunatic brightened. He came rapidly forward.

"Did you see her?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you gave her the flower?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did she seem surprised or—anything?"

Lucy hesitated. "I couldn't say, sir."

"But didn't you notice?"

"Yes, sir. I noticed whatever there was."

"And you could not see the slightest surprise, or pleasure or displeasure, or any expression whatever on her face?"

"No, sir."

He took a backward step, and regarded her as if suspecting falsehood. She understood the look. A blush came into her honest face. "I am trying to tell you the truth, sir—and do my duty."

He smiled. "I hope your truth and duty are not opposing forces."

"No, sir."

"They can work together sometimes. But didn't she say anything at all, or ask a question?"

"She asked what your name was and I said I didn't know, which was the truth, sir."

"Of course! Of course! But didn't she appear to know who sent it?"

Lucy said nothing.

"Didn't she ask for any sort of description?"

Still hampered by the unrelenting conscience Lucy made no reply.

More impatiently he inquired, "Then she took it as a matter of course, just as an everyday occurrence?"

Lucy's silence and her look of indecision clearly indicated an inward struggle.

"Did she receive it as she would a—an old newspaper for instance?"

"No, sir."

"Did she toss it out of the window?"

"Oh no, sir! She took it twice."

"Took it twice?"

"Yes, sir. She handed it back to me and then took it again. I was to be sure and tell you."

He frowned, as if bewildered. "You say she told you to tell me that she took it twice?"

"No, sir. That she only took it the second time."

"Then she took it twice, but not the first time."

"Yes, sir."

As he closed his eyes and drew a hand across his forehead, obviously in some mental confusion, Lucy felt surer than ever of his disordered reason. But there was something in his personality that she liked. Instead of fearing, she began to pity him.

"But why—" he murmured—"why could—how—why did she say—or do—that?"

"I don't know, sir."

It was now the daft man's turn to study the countenance of the ambassadress for signs of wandering

wits. But the big, round, honest eyes looked calmly into his own with an inert but stable sanity. The brain behind those eyes was unimaginative perhaps, slow moving and incapable of sudden readjustment, but it was normal.

Gently, but somewhat wearily, he asked, "Was that all she said—or did—or did not?"

"No, sir. She said to thank you for the rose, and that she would see you tomorrow at five o'clock."

"Tomorrow! Why not today?"

"She did not say, sir."

"Are you sure it was tomorrow, and not today?"

"Yes, sir. Very sure. I think she is not up to it."

"Not up to it?"

"Yes, sir. No, sir. Not up to seeing you today, sir. She said she would see you tomorrow at five o'clock if she was well enough."

"Oh!" and the lunatic's face became more grave and he looked away, over the meadows. So melancholy, indeed, was his expression that Lucy, whose heart was tender, felt yet more pity for him. But the uncompromising conscience permitted no wanderings from the path of duty; and she added:

"After she said that, and had smelled the rose, she took up a book and went on with her reading."

Whereupon the eyes of the demented gentleman came back from the meadows and met her own with a look that told plainly of an unexpected blow; of a sharp distress.

Deep was Lucy's sympathy. But as she could think of nothing more encouraging on the instant she remarked, merely to break the silence,

"The book was a dictionary."

The demented one nodded, as acknowledgment of unimportant news. "She was reading French or German, perhaps."

"No, sir. It was an English dictionary."

"Then she had another book, too?"

"No, sir. Only the dictionary."

Then he—himself suspected of dementia—began to wonder if some mysterious malady had disturbed Lady Octavia's brain.

From the corners of his eyes he regarded the ambassadress. "When you entered the room she was reading an English dictionary?"

Lucy frowned, and again showed embarrassment. "I did not say that, sir."

"You said she took up her book and went on with the reading."

Lucy looked away.

"Didn't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"You must excuse me if I seem fussy or impatient. But I landed at Portsmouth last night and have been steering my motor through mud and rain in the dark, ever since. Possibly I am unreasonably nervous. I may be slow of comprehension, and I confess with shame that, in spite of your report, I have not a clear understanding of just what hap-

pened. But when you presented the rose she showed no surprise or interest. She simply took it without really taking it and inquired the name of the sender, which you could not give. Then she handed it back to you but took it again, the second time, which you say was the first time, and told you to be sure and mention that fact."

Lucy's cheeks became redder, and she looked away. "No, sir, not that exactly."

"Then she told you to thank me for it. Said I might call tomorrow at five o'clock if she were well enough. Then she laid the rose in her lap, and took up the English dictionary, the perusal of which you and the rose had interrupted."

Lucy remained silent, her troubled eyes on the distant church tower.

Again he smiled. "Well, that's all right. People when desperately ill do not, as a rule, seek consolation in the dictionary. However, I respect your sense of duty. Would you mind telling me your name?"

"Lucy Lake."

"Mine is Ethan Lovejoy. And as we are two honest people who never betray our friends—that is, intentionally—we can understand and respect each other. But there is one thing you can tell me, Lucy, and still be faithful to Lady Octavia—you can tell me just how she looks. Is she pale and thin?"

"Oh yes, sir!"

"Much changed since a year ago?"

"Oh, yes, indeed, sir! It's terrible." And the large, round eyes suddenly filled with tears. The demented one's face also became more serious.

"She has always been so good!" Lucy added with a quivering lip, "so good!"

"Yes, we all know that," he murmured.

"She never forgot my birthday. From Paris, two years ago, she sent me a locket." And drawing from her sleeve a little white handkerchief with yellow dots Lucy wiped two tears from her cheeks. "And she gave me this waterproof I have on. And now there are two doctors."

"Two doctors besides Dr. Wherry?"

"No, sir. Dr. Wherry and one other; a nervous doctor."

"A nervous doctor?"

"Yes, sir. He came down specially from London, this morning."

Then he of disordered reason hazarded a guess. "You mean, perhaps, a doctor in nervous diseases?"

"I couldn't say, sir, but it's something dreadful. She may die."

"Die! Nonsense! Why do you say that?"

"Because nobody knows what is the matter with her."

Somewhat impatiently he retorted: "That's no proof that she is going to die."

But in a plesanter tone he said: "Cheer up. Don't cry," and he patted her arm. "She may get well."

He took some coins from a pocket. "And I am much obliged to you for what you have done."

Lucy backed away. "No, sir, don't give me any more money!"

"Why not? You have earned it."

"No, sir, I have not."

Returning the coins to his pocket, he held out his hand. She seemed surprised.

"Shake hands," he insisted.

Hesitatingly she laid her hand in his. The strong fingers closed over it in a friendly pressure. "You are a good girl, Lucy Lake, and you have qualities that are worth more than all the money in the world. You have done your best to keep faith with both of us. Please count me among your friends. Good bye."

Into her moist eyes came a brighter look. She could only stammer, "Thank you, sir—very much." And, with a curtsy, she turned and hurried from the garden.

XXV

"SCIENCE DEMANDS IT"

WHILE Lucy Lake, with good intentions, was trying to mingle truth with diplomacy at the far end of the castle, the two doctors still consulted at the head of the great staircase. This long drawn conference was not the result of any difference of opinion. It resulted from a careful revision of the case, and from some difficulty in deciding the best manner of announcing the verdict. The verdict was unfavorable. To dress up Ignorance in the shining robes of Wisdom requires, at times, consideration. This was one of those occasions. Both doctors, however, were men of experience. At last, fully prepared, they descended to the waiting family.

The old earl, Lady Georgiana and Lord Aylesden were seated in the library near one of the windows. In front of this anxious group the two physicians placed themselves, the Eminent Specialist in a chair, Dr. Wherry standing near. After a brief but painful silence the Eminent Specialist began. He was a heavy man with a fine head, intelligent eyes and a full, untrimmed, reddish beard. While not sloven-

ly he was somewhat indifferent as to his appearance.

In a firm, steady, yet sympathetic voice he informed his listeners, that in nervous afflictions of this nature no two cases were ever absolutely similar; that symptoms definite and conclusive with one patient were misleading in another; that each case demanded its own study, a fresh diagnosis on independent lines; that in these cases—so called nervous—there existed an interweaving of mental and physical disturbances that often contradicted all previous observation; that with Lady Octavia the absence of guiding symptoms of any physical disease, combined with excessive waste of tissue and exhaustion of vitality from no explainable mental or emotional shock, constituted the uncertainty of the present disorder. This, and something more, with an occasional introduction of technical terms, formed the substance of his remarks.

"But surely, Doctor van Horne," exclaimed Auntie George, "you think she will soon recover!"

With a slight shrug of the shoulders he answered, "My dear Lady Georgiana, there is of course that possibility. There is always hope."

"Do you really mean to tell us," said Lord Aylesden, "that she is—is really—going to be, indefinitely, an invalid?"

"I do not say that. I feel it my duty, however, to be frank with you. In the various cases, some-

what similar, which have come under my observation the recoveries have been very slow."

Auntie George, in silence, closed her eyes, leaned back and pressed her handkerchief to her face. Lord Aylesden got up from his chair, moved away and stood before a window. The Earl of Drumworth's head sank forward. He tapped the arm of his chair with nervous, uncertain fingers.

And then it was that the impossible happened. The Eminent Specialist, who sat with his back to the door, had begun a speech of consoling intent, though he promised little hope. "If I can be of any service at any hour, Dr. Wherry is to write me and—" He went no further.

Auntie George with a sudden exclamation had risen to her feet. And after the sudden exclamation her mouth remained open. Her eyes, also wide open, were staring, in amazement—joy or horror—toward the door of the hall. The four men, all startled by her voice, turned their eyes in the same direction. And what they saw brought a similar look into their own faces. Dr. van Horne, who was sitting back to the door, rose somewhat hastily and faced about. In so doing he knocked over his chair.

In the doorway stood Octavia. Not pale and leaning upon a nurse's arm, but erect, firm on her feet, with color in her cheeks and a smile on her lips. Moreover, from crown to toe she was carefully and daintily attired. In recognition of the general as-

tonishment she nodded gayly to those present. In a voice equally gay she exclaimed,

"I am feeling better!"

Passing close to Dr. Wherry she tapped his arm. His only acknowledgment of this attention was a scowl and a shake of the head. Still she smiled. "It came all of a sudden!"

"I should say it did," he muttered.

Then followed a confusion of voices: queries and answers; expressions of delight, surprise, almost of unbelief. Auntie George and Octavia's father had hastened forward as if doubting their senses of sight and of hearing until verified by the sense of touch.

Dr. Van Horne had not recognized, at once, this new arrival. But the members of the family were too deeply occupied by their own happiness to take note of other people. Dr. Wherry, however, in looking toward his famous colleague to discover how this seeming miracle had affected him, saw that he was regarding Octavia in frank astonishment.

And why not? This radiant creature of blooming color and joyful spirits bore little resemblance to the pale and listless invalid whom he had visited an hour ago. At a word from Dr. Wherry, however, he understood. Then, after adding his own congratulations to those of her overjoyed family, he addressed the maiden.

"And I am sincerely glad that you have received such welcome news."

Octavia raised her eyebrows. "What news?"

Dr. van Horne smiled. "Ah, my lady, that is your own secret."

"But I have received no news."

"No letter, no telegram? No unexpected message of any kind?"

"No."

This brief falsehood was delivered with calm eyes, and in a voice of protesting innocence. But she could not prevent a sudden tingling in her cheeks.

In a fatherly manner he patted her arm.

"Keep your secret, my dear lady. It may move in a mysterious way its wonders to perform, but it is surely beneficial."

"Oh! You think I am keeping something from you!"

Dr. van Horne smiled. "I am sure of it." Octavia frowned. But Dr. van Horne maintained the doubting smile. "Truth is often exhausting; and now you need strength. By the way, aren't you hungry?"

"Yes, indeed I am!"

"Good! Eat at once. Something nourishing but not too heavy. Something that will assimilate with that life-giving secret."

"But there is no secret." And she laughed, a careless little laugh, but with a shade of embarrassment.

Entering the dining room a few minutes later, in obedience to the suddenly acquired appetite, she heard footsteps behind her and turned about. Dr.

Wherry was just closing the door. Then, against the closed door he stood and scowled.

"What is it?" she asked, and moved toward him. But he waved her away.

"What is it, indeed! Impudence—and ingratitude; that's what it is."

"Why, Dockey, what do you mean?"

"You have no shame and no pride: nor honor nor conscience. That's what I mean."

Octavia shook her head reprovingly. "Oh, what things to say!"

Dr. Wherry also shook his head, but up and down solemnly, with the threatening scowl. "Even Dr. van Horne could not help guessing your degrading secret."

"Really!" And Octavia's eyebrows soared aloft. "Then he is wiser than I am."

"And I shall give him further particulars. Science, duty, gratitude, common civility, all demand that he shall know."

"That he shall know what?"

The little man paused a moment before answering, and his frown deepened.

"That your lover has come back to you."

As if receiving a blow Octavia took a backward step, her eyes fixed in alarm on the scowling man. Could he—was it possible that he knew? No—it was merely his guess. And she smiled. But her hand trembled as she raised it to her hair, as if a careless movement. And the voice was uncertain in which she retorted,

"Which lover do you mean? There are several, you know."

Dr. Wherry straightened his spectacles with one hand, at the same time blinking his eyes as if angry —or laughing at her; it was hard to know which.

"I mean—" and again the head moved slowly up and down—"I mean—the American. His name is Lovejoy."

This time Octavia caught her breath, closed her eyes, and pressed a hand against her face. She leaned upon the table for support. Had the innermost secret of her soul become common property? No, she could not believe it. But she remembered Dr. van Horne's words: and these other words, now from Dr. Wherry, were piercing her brain.

"Oh yes! A love-sick maid. Just pining away. A nice trick to play upon your friends! You certainly deceived us, and frightened us—for many months—and with perfect success!"

She knew that Dr. Wherry was laughing at her, but this laying bare the sacred privacy of her heart came with a shock. Although her limbs were weak, her pride did not desert her. Still leaning upon the table she raised her head. "What are you inventing, Dockey? What crazy idea is in your mischief making head?"

She came toward him to lay her hands on his shoulders. But he took her two wrists and pushed her gently away, with a warlike frown. "How many kinds of a fool do you think I am?"

"All kinds."

"You are mistaken. Last summer when we were standing before the ruins of the fire and I was praising this man's deed, I happened to look up into your face. And you looked into mine."

"Yes. I have often done that, because I like your face, bad as it is."

"And your eyes gave you away. They were brimming over with pride, as if you owned him. Your whole soul was in them. They were moist, and tender, and glad. Oh, I can read! I have seen women in love. I know the symptoms."

"What nonsense! Outrageous, disgusting nonsense!"

"And I read your silly secret as clearly as if you had shouted it from the housetops. As clearly as if you had waved your arms and screamed, 'I love that American!' "

"Stop, stop! Oh, how can you? What a hateful malicious old man!" And she pressed both hands against her burning cheeks. "And you told everybody you met, of course!"

"No. I told nobody. I kept the mortifying knowledge to myself."

Octavia, with a flushed, appealing face, came toward him with extended arms. Again he pushed away the hands. "Don't touch me, you shameless woman!"

"Oh, Dockey! How can you!"

"But I shall keep the sickening secret no longer. I shall tell everything to Dr. van Horne. It is only right that he should know. Besides, science demands it."

"Oh! You wouldn't really?"

"Indeed I would! It is no more than my duty. He not only has a right to know the condition of his patients but it is absolutely necessary, to be of service in his profession, that he should not be kept in ignorance. As I said before, science demands it."

Dr. Wherry was not prepared for Octavia's reception of this speech. In silence she turned away, dropped into a chair, leaned forward on the dining table, and wept. He hurried to her side. An arm around her shoulders, his cheek against hers, he exclaimed:

"Don't cry! Oh, don't cry, Octavia. I am a brute. I forgot that you are ill and weak. There, there! Now brace up. You must eat something. I take it all back—everything, everything."

Still she wept. "You cannot. It—it—is too late."

"It is never too late. You know it was all in joke. And after all, when you come to think about it, your case is not so very shocking. I once knew an excellent woman who cared for a man. She even married him. Besides—"

He straightened up, and listened. "What's that?

They are in the hall. I must head 'em off." And he started for the door.

Looking back into two tearful eyes, he heard, between sobs:

"But you—will—tell them everything."

"I shall tell them nothing. Not a word. It's none of their business."

"But—but—" here she looked up and tried to smile—"science—demands it."

"Science to the devil!"

Then the door closed behind him.

XXVI

THE CRAZY GENTLEMAN GETS WORSE

WHEN the clock in the laundry struck four Lucy Lake put aside a linen garment she was mending and slipped on her waterproof. Her mother looked up from her ironing.

"Where are your going, Lucy?"

"Into the old garden to see if the strange gentleman fastened the gate when he went out."

The mother nodded, and went on with her work.

It may be well to explain that one of Lucy's attributes was an overwhelming—but enjoyable—sense of responsibility. She had always preferred tending a baby to playing with other girls. Tending two babies gave her twice as much pleasure as tending one baby. She had thoroughly enjoyed, almost from infancy, a solemn responsibility for all that happened in her neighborhood.

A drizzling rain was still falling as she entered the Garden of the Sleeping Beauty. The statue of Cupid, although dripping with water, bespoke a joyful dancer. In the obscuring mist the quaintly trimmed shrubbery stood dimly forth, grey and wet. As she was passing the stone seat, she stopped, sud-

denly, with an exclamation of surprise. There sat a man; silent, motionless, his chin in his hand. At the sound of her voice he looked up; and he seemed as surprised as herself.

"Why, sir, you still here!"

Smiling faintly, he straightened up and drew a long breath. "I believe I am."

Lucy's motherly heart was touched by the changes in his face. He appeared many years older than when she had left him there, six hours ago. There was weariness in the eyes. Lines had formed beside the mouth.

"But, sir, it is after four o'clock."

"Really?"

"Yes, sir."

Her eyes rested on his leather overcoat. It seemed very wet, and it looked, in places, especially about the shoulders, as if soaked with rain. A question which might appear impertinent and inhospitable was on her lips, and she hesitated. But she mustered courage. "Have you been here, sir, ever since?"

"I think so. What time do you say it is?"

"Four o'clock."

He raised his eyebrows and puckered his lips, but said nothing. Then Lucy Lake's motherly instincts, abetted by her sense of responsibility, all came into action.

"You must be hungry."

He arose slowly as if stiff from being long in one position. "Oh, I don't know."

"Have you eaten nothing since morning?"

"Why no; so I haven't! Nor this morning either, come to think."

"You must be *very* hungry, sir."

He looked down into her face and smiled, the friendly smile that dispelled all fear of him as a crazy person. "You are a good friend, Lucy Lake. Very kind and thoughtful."

Embarrassed, she took a backward step. "Oh no, sir! But I can get you a sandwich or something, and a cup of tea."

"Thank you. You are very good—and I appreciate it. But I—" turning partly away, and in a lower tone—"I don't feel like eating."

Again the motherly heart was stirred by the joyless, despondent face. Her little, round mouth expanded slightly, into a smile.

"Would you feel more hungry, sir, if you heard good news?"

Quickly he turned, and his eyes looked eagerly into her own. "Is there good news?"

Lucy nodded.

"Of Lady Octavia?"

"Yes, sir."

"What is it? Is she better?"

"Yes, sir. She is very much better."

"Good! Good! And the doctors say it is nothing serious?"

"Yes, sir."

"Oh, that is news worth hearing!"

"Yes, sir. She is up and dressed, and this forenoon she came downstairs."

"Well, that *is* good news!" And he laid a hand on each of her shoulders and gave her a gentle shake.

"Why, Lucy, that is the best news in the world!" And the smile that lit up his face seemed to transform him into a boy again. He had become, in an instant, several years younger. The lines of care and gloom had vanished. A more joyful face she had never seen; and she smiled—from sympathy.

"That is splendid!" he exclaimed. "I feel like dancing. You may kiss me for a quarter!"

Lucy frowned, and drew back. He removed the hands from her shoulders and laughed. "Well, that was only a suggestion. I could think of no better way of celebrating the event. Do you know what a quarter is?"

"Yes, sir; a fourth."

"Of what?"

"Of anything."

"Gad, so it is! But in this case it's money; about a shilling. I merely had in mind the old proverb, 'A kiss in time is the best policy.' "

Again Lucy frowned. "I never heard it before."

Raising both hands to his forehead, elbows out, as for light and air, he pushed back his cap, and it fell to earth. But his thoughts were elsewhere and he observed it not. With face upturned, eyes closed and a smile on his lips, he seemed to be

inhaling happiness. The drizzling rain fell gently on him, as if to cool a fever. Also, it seemed—to him—like felicitations from above.

Then, with upturned eyes he moved his arms, like a bird about to fly. This performance, evidently an expression of excessive joy, did not surprise Lucy Lake. She knew it was the nature of crazy people to do unusual things. Besides, his happiness was a pleasant thing to see. He was behaving like a boy of ten. With eyes still upturned he exclaimed:

"There is always sunshine behind the clouds, isn't there?"

"Yes, sir. Very likely."

"You remember the old proverb, 'The course of true love has a silver lining.'"

"That's not the way it runs, sir. You have got two proverbs mixed."

His smiling eyes came down from heaven and gazed into her serious face.

"Have I? Well, there's one thing we are sure of, and that is, the course of true love is the shortest way home."

"Oh no, sir!"

"Then it's the longest way round—which I refuse to believe."

Still Lucy frowned, not in anger, but in a mental effort to rectify an error. "I am not contradicting you, sir, but you get the proverbs jumbled."

"Well, even if I do, the fact remains that the course of true love is the biggest and most import-

ant thing in creation. It is bigger than astronomy. Isn't it?"

This was so clearly the working of a disordered brain that Lucy remained silent. She knew that insane persons were sometimes violent when opposed. This gentleman, however, had thus far shown no signs of anger.

"Were you ever in love?" he asked.

Lucy blushed. "Not to speak of, sir."

"Not to speak of! Good heavens! Why, earthquakes are nothing to it! It's a conflagration and a stormy sea, all in one. You are like a cork on a raging ocean. Incidentally it lifts you up to heaven then flings you down again, deeper than a million fathoms. And does it several times a day. That, roughly speaking, is the course of true love."

Lucy smiled. "I don't think I should like it."

"Oh, yes you would! Everybody likes it. After once tasting, life is dull without it. But I must be off. Now that I am alive again I do feel empty. So I'll trot away to the inn. How can I show my gratitude for all you have done for me?"

"I have done nothing, sir."

"On the contrary, you have brought me the best news I ever heard in my life. Suppose some old aunt were to make you a present, what would you choose?"

"Oh, I couldn't say, sir."

"Have you a watch?"

"No, sir."

"Have you a middle name?"

"No, sir."

"Just Lucy Lake?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, good bye, Lucy Lake. And we shall meet hereafter, either many times or not at all."

"What do you mean by that, sir?"

"Oh, it's the way of the world. Good bye."

And they shook hands. Then he bowed, as respectfully as if she were the lady of the castle, turned and walked away—bareheaded, without his cap.

But no act of this poor gentleman, however eccentric, would have surprised Lucy Lake. She called after him, picked up the cap and presented it. He thanked her, adding with a smile, "This is a momentous day, and rather upsetting. I am not always quite so giddy." Which seemed, to the maiden, an acknowledgment that he realized his affliction.

Then he left the old garden as he had entered it, by the little door toward the river.

From Drumworth Castle the crazy gentleman went straight to the shop of the village jeweler. It was a small shop, and its choice of watches not confusing. But he selected the best of them all—a little watch of good design, pronounced by Mr. James Thorp, the proprietor, "a most genteel gift for any lady, the works guaranteed." The giver

paid for it—£7 10s.—and wrote out carefully the inscription to be engraved inside the case:

To
LUCY LAKE
From her Grateful
Friend
E. L.

XXVII

SENTENCE OF DEATH

DURING the night the rain ceased. Then, between masses of scudding mist, the moon appeared. Later on, from a radiant sky—deep blue with great white clouds—the sun proclaimed a perfect day.

In the afternoon an equipage, also perfect, stood glistening before a door of Drumworth Castle. The Lady Georgiana came forth. About to enter the carriage her glance fell upon a nearby object. She frowned. Still frowning she addressed the footman who stood beside her.

"Miles, there is that awful dog again."

Miles also looked at the dog, who stood just behind the carriage. Baseborn acknowledged the attention of these two imposing people by a cocking of the ears and a rapid, horizontal, friendly movement of his tail. He seemed to have no suspicion of his shocking contrast with the equipage, which was thoroughly patrician.

"I have told you once before," said the lady, "to see that this did not occur again. We cannot have such a creature on the premises."

"I am very sorry, your ladyship. I did not know he was here."

Lady Georgiana transferred her frown upward to the coachman on the box.

"Send that dog off, Basset, and see that he does not return. Give him away."

Basset turned his face toward Lady Georgiana so far as his stiff collar would permit. "We can't give him away, your ladyship. Nobody wants him."

"Have you tried?"

"All through the village."

"Then take him far away and leave him somewhere."

"We have already tried that, your ladyship."

"And he still returns?"

"He gets home first."

Lady Georgiana's frown deepened. It seemed to include her nose and mouth. Was she to be triumphantly circumvented by a thing like this present cur? Again her glance rested on Baseborn. For a moment they studied each other. In the cold eyes of the lady were contempt and hostility. In Baseborn's admiration and cordiality. The dog's eyes and tail told clearly his desire for a better understanding between the lady and himself. But the lady went no further than externals. And in the matter of externals Baseborn was a blunder. For a brief moment Lady Georgiana gazed upon his rugged outlines and dingy coloring. Unless appearances were incredibly mendacious he was a poor

specimen of his kind; and the kind was cheap. From the tip of his nose to the end of his gnarled extremity there was not a suggestion of gentle birth. He was surprisingly plebeian.

In a tone of unspeakable contempt—and of loathing—the lady inquired, "What sort of dog is he, Basset?"

For a moment Basset hesitated. "I should say, your ladyship, that his father was a bulldog and his mother was miscellaneous."

"If he were a man," said the lady, "he would be in jail. You say it is impossible to get rid of him?"

"Yes, your ladyship."

"Then have him put out of the way. Kindly, of course, with chloroform. You understand?"

"Yes, your ladyship."

"Now let there be no mistake about it. See that it is done tonight."

"Yes, your ladyship. I will attend to it."

Had Baseborn understood these fateful words he might have protested. He might have argued that for the sin of plainness death was too severe a punishment. As it was, his honest, inquiring eyes remained fixed on the lady's face, doubting, yet hoping for the best. But she merely said, still frowning:

"Take the whip, Miles, and drive him off."

This was done; and Baseborn, depressed but not surprised, retreated toward the stables.

At that instant a voice came from the hall.

"Oh, Auntie George! It is such a lovely afternoon I think I will go too, just for the drive."

"Do come, Octavia. The air will do you good."

"They can bring me back, then return again for you."

This plan being approved the victoria with the two ladies was soon rolling beneath the overhanging trees, along the straight, wide avenue of Drumworth park.

About two miles from home Auntie George suddenly straightened up.

"Basset! Stop!"

Octavia was alarmed. "What's the matter, Auntie George? Are you ill?"

"No. It's that awful dog!"

And lo! Beside the carriage stood Baseborn, looking joyfully up, breathing hard, his tongue out, his tail wagging. Were it possible to appear more vulgar and disreputable than usual, he was doing it now. Covered with dust from running close behind the vehicle he certainly appeared—compared with the glistening equipage—a disgraceful thing. When ordered back he merely stood and gazed up into Octavia's face with a look of unquenchable admiration. A sharp word from Basset and a yet sharper cut from the whip, aimed at random, across the upturned head, brought a cry of protest from Octavia. And when she looked back, at a turning of the road nearly a quarter of a mile beyond, she saw Baseborn still standing where they had left him.

Auntie George frowned. "Is he following?"

"No," Octavia answered. "But it was a shame to strike him. Never do that again, Basset."

In the apologetic acknowledgment of this command by Basset, and in the silence of Auntie George, was hidden a somber secret unsuspected by Octavia. They had good reason to believe that before the rising of another sun that dog would be far beyond the pain of earthly whips.

After depositing Auntie George for her bridge party—not three miles from the castle—Octavia started homeward. At a turning of the road, where the tall trees of Drumworth forest lined the highway on either side, she stopped the carriage, and alighted.

"I think I will walk home, Basset, through the woods."

"Don't do it, your ladyship!" Basset was sixty years old and had been in the family all his life.

"Why not?"

"You are not strong enough yet. And it is nearly a mile by that path."

Octavia smiled, and shook her head. "I am stronger than you think. And that path and I are old friends."

Basset still protested. "Then, Miles, you follow her ladyship."

"No, no! I prefer to be alone." And climbing three rough stone steps she passed through a narrow opening in the wall, and disappeared. Miles clam-

bered to his seat and the carriage returned for Auntie George.

Two years had gone by since Octavia had used this path. Now, once again in the silent wood she drew a deep breath of that many-scented, mysterious, sunless atmosphere which recalls, more than all else, the fairy land of our childhood. For this air of the woods is the air once breathed by gnomes and elfs and sprites and witches, by enchanted animals, by dwarfs and giants, by knights and fairy princes. As she inhaled this air and penetrated farther into the shadowy depths she seemed to have left the world behind, the everyday world of ordinary people, and was entering, once again, a world of her childhood; a world where nothing was impossible. The silence, to be sure, the breathless, solemn, living silence—as of a host of invisible creatures—broken only by a falling twig or the sound of an overhead woodpecker, was mildly terrifying. Could Octavia have seen herself as she appeared to the denizens of this wood—notably certain birds and squirrels—she would have understood their astonishment and why they gave her so wide a berth. With her white dress and crimson sunshade she was a startling object in the surrounding gloom.

The narrow, winding path was a little rougher than formerly, as if less traveled. Two squirrels in the heat of a family quarrel caused her to stop for a moment, and look up. As she started forward,

still looking up, she tripped against a root, and nearly fell. Being still a convalescent, and weaker than she realized, this trifling accident with its mild shock, created a vague uneasiness, intensified perhaps by the silence and the solitude. Her uneasiness was increased by the sight of a huge boulder around which the path made a sudden turn. For this boulder, she remembered, was only half-way through the wood. She knew, now, that she had overestimated her strength. As she turned the corner made by the angle of the great rock she stopped short with a smothered cry. In the path, and almost touching her, stood a figure that drove the color from her cheeks. It was the figure of a professional tramp of the most offensive type. His besotted eyes, unshaven chin, and the filthy discolored garments that hung upon his limbs were all repugnant. As she shrunk back, a hand against her cheek, and loathing in her face, the man smiled. He lifted from his head a filthy rag that was once a cap, and made the mockery of a bow.

"You needn't be afraid of me, miss. I'm a great friend of the ladies."

From his voice and manner she knew he had been drinking. Gazing upon her with a smile of admiration he continued, "You are the prettiest of 'em all—the whole lot—and I'm just givin' it to yer straight."

With as much severity as fright permitted, but in a trembling voice, she said, "Please let me pass."

He smiled, in enjoyment of her terror. "No, you ain't in any hurry. There's nobody with yer, or you wouldn't be so scared. And there ain't anybody the way I come. So we needn't hurry. See?"

Her knees threatened to give way beneath her. She stepped—or rather tottered—backward, and leaned against the rock. "Please let me go on, sir; I'm—I'm in a hurry."

"No, you ain't in any hurry whatever. But I'll tell yer what I'll do. You give me one kiss—just one nice little kiss—and then we'll talk it over. Come now, that's fair."

He came a step nearer. Octavia, growing weaker with every second, moved backward, still resting a hand against the rock. Without support she felt she might fall.

He enjoyed her agony.

"Say now," and his voice was lowered to a still huskier tone, "good friends like to be alone. We'll just step aside to a more secluded spot, hey?"

On the verge of collapse, she tried to cry for help, but even her voice had forsaken her. Her cry was hardly more than a whisper. As he came closer yet, and laid hold on both her shoulders, she threw up her hands between her face and his, and made a desperate effort to wrench herself from the polluting touch. As well might a doe struggle in the claws of a hungry lion. Close to her face came the loose-lipped, unclean mouth, and the gloating eyes. Faint and dizzy, exhausted by the violent effort, her head

was beginning to swim in a hideous, unutterable despair, when, from the foul, hot lips came a cry of rage—and of pain. With a curse, and a spasmodic jerk of his whole body, that nearly threw Octavia to the ground, he released his hold and wheeled about. She saw him aiming blows at some object behind him. That object was a dog. And his teeth were locked with an iron grip in one of the ankles of the man. Octavia rallied with a sudden strength, of joy and hope—when she recognized Baseborn. As the man wheeled about, in helpless fury, the eyes of Baseborn and Octavia met. And Baseborn's eyes, in an upturned, sidelong glance, said clearly as in spoken words,

"Run! Quick!"

And Octavia ran.

XXVII

UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE

TOWARD the castle she ran.

And she ran as only those can run with death—or worse—behind.

To her it seemed an hour, this flight—and a measureless distance. In reality it was less than half a mile. As she neared the edge of the wood, catching glimpses between the trees of the distant, sunlit castle, she saw a man in grey clothes—not a tramp—leaning against an ancient oak. His back was toward her. In terror of things behind—perhaps close behind—she called, involuntarily, for help. Quickly he wheeled about, then with a cry of joy came forward to the running figure. And the running figure, exhausted, hysterical, but safe!—fluttered into his arms. The arms closed around her. Between his exclamations of surprise he kissed her, on mouth, cheeks, forehead—anywhere. Then, at arms' length he supported the panting, blushing, feebly protesting, almost fainting girl, and drank in—as a thirsty lover—the burning cheeks, the tumbling hair, the moist eyes, the quivering lips.

Her hat was dangling behind her head; a lock of

the gold-brown hair had fallen across her cheek. The evading eyes, the face of changing color, all told for him a thrilling tale of wild emotions—an entrancing betrayal of surprise, joy, shame; and then—a sudden resentment. She frowned, and with protesting hands against his chest tried to push herself away.

"You don't think I—I ran into your arms because—because—"

"Because you love me? Yes, indeed I do! Why not, when you are mine, mine, and you know I love you more than—"

"No! No! I did not—"

"Yes, yes! I listen to nothing but yes!"

But still smiling from a happiness too perfect for doubts or fears, he released her; and she, retreating a step or two, stood with her back against a tree, breathing hard, and ready to sink from exhaustion.

"I was running from that man—that thing—" she shuddered, and closed her eyes—"who held me back there—and—and tried to—kiss me."

"Held you! And tried to kiss you!"

In a broken voice, barely audible, a quivering hand before her eyes, she murmured, "Oh, I must try—not—think of it!"

Then she was startled by a sudden change in his voice. In a rougher tone he demanded,

"Where? When? Just now?"

Uncovering her eyes she looked into a face whose

expression was completely transformed. The familiar grey eyes, now harder and with no trace of mirth, were frowning into her own. The joyous smile of a moment ago was supplanted by a tightening of the lips.

She nodded. "Back there. Baseborn is—holding him."

Ethan Lovejoy said nothing, but he turned away. In three long strides he reached a pile of staves. They were a little thicker than hoe handles, and were intended for a wire fence. Calmly, but with no loss of time, he selected one.

Again the color left Octavia's cheeks. "What are you going to do?"

"Find him."

"No, no! Listen. Don't go there. He is—a—a desperate character; and very strong."

Ethan smiled. "Is he? So am I."

He added, and it was more a command than a request: "Sit down. I will be back in a minute."

Then he hurried away. Running with an easy, rapid gait along the fateful path he disappeared among the trees.

Judging time by Octavia's hopes and fears he was absent many hours. At last—thirty minutes perhaps—her straining eyes caught glimpses, between tree trunks, of an approaching spot of crimson. Her forgotten sunshade! Next appeared Baseborn; then the man. In Baseborn's varied career he had never received so warm a welcome. She stroked

him, and caressed him. Holding his face with both hands she tried to express her gratitude. Words failed, but Baseborn understood. So great was his joy that Ethan, who had thrown himself full length upon the ground beside them, remarked, "With one exception he is the happiest dog in England." Then he took the hand that was nearest and touched it with his lips. Octavia looked down into the familiar grey eyes, that again were smiling. Again they were gentle, with lines of mirth—and more than friendly!

"What did you do to that man?"

"Oh, not much, considering. I found Baseborn standing guard over him."

Again Octavia patted the silent hero. "Dear Baseborn, I used to think you ugly. Now you are more than beautiful. Nothing shall ever part us. But tell me, what happened?"

"Our interview was short. He is now moving toward the village, on his way to the hospital."

"Well, go on."

"When I discovered him he was trying to bandage an ankle that Baseborn had crippled. I mentioned, in few words, the business that brought me to him. He protested innocence, ignorance, all the good things. Then he picked up his own stick with one hand, and waved a vicious looking knife with the other; a knife with which he had been trying to get at Baseborn. But Baseborn is a wise fighter and he

outgeneraled him. Having weakened the enemy he used Fabian tactics."

Octavia, a hand on Baseborn's head, looked down into his eyes and murmured words that any champion, dog or human, would love to hear.

"Then the human brute and your humble servant came down to business. It really was not a fight—merely punishment. He was slow, and scared. When the thing was over and he lay on the ground I realized that one of his arms was broken, among other troubles, and I told him how to find the hospital. So there you have all the details. This evening I will see Dr. Wherry about him. Dr. Wherry will tell the town officers and it will be a long time before he insults another woman."

Lazily across the far-reaching lawn of Drumworth Castle came the south wind. Lazily it entered the wood. Lazily and gently it touched the faces of these contented persons. Three creatures more contented never sat beneath a tree. Being a dog, and denied—unjustly we believe—the gift of speech, Baseborn's unutterable contentment was freely expressed by his eyes, tail, and general demeanor. Pressing close to Octavia he received frequent tokens of the warmest appreciation. And he displayed, after a time, that jealousy characteristic of dogs by resenting, amiably, the more than friendly understanding which had suddenly developed between his benefactor and this adorable lady. He forcibly inserted himself between Octavia, who was

sitting with her back against the old oak, and Ethan Lovejoy reclining beside her. While these earnest efforts caused a certain merriment, he was treated, nevertheless, with the honor, the gratitude and the gentle consideration that belonged to the hero of the day. The lady was amused. But the man glowered upon the hero. "Look here, you Perseus Chevalier Bayard Horatius Launcelot Baseborn, aren't you presuming on your laurels? I, too, am this lady's property."

"Yes, but your position is secondary. He shall always be first in my affections."

"Well, did you ever! And it was I who offered him to you, and you, in your soulless pride, sneered at the offer."

"But all that was a year ago. I have outgrown certain kinds of pride, thanks to you and him. I have learned within an hour that base born things are not to be despised. Are they, angel Baseborn?"

Being a modest dog this savior of maidens made no reply, other than a gentle movement of the plebeian tail.

"I am ashamed to confess that once I thought otherwise. But I have reformed: and oh, so thoroughly! And to think that I began by despising Baseborn because appearances were against him!"

"We bear no malice for that early contempt. Our love for the lady of our choice is dependable and undying."

Baseborn's eyes moved solemnly from the speaker

to the lady's face, and he made it clear by look and caudal agitation that these sentiments were his own.

"Thanks," said Octavia. "You are an honest couple. But how you do stare at me, you two! It's dreadfully embarrassing. You behaved better in the Old Hall. You dared not be so rude."

"Stare at you! Why, I am drinking you in as a thirsty soul drinks life and light. Why shouldn't I?"

With the handle of her parasol against his cheek she tried to turn his head away. "You drink too much."

"But such a happy drunkard! May I never be sober!"

"A drunkard!" she exclaimed. "That would, indeed, be too much! For Americans, I am told, are already thieves and liars."

"But good husbands. The best in the world."

"So I hear. Is it really true?"

"Try one."

Octavia laughed. "Very well; since you ask it."

Then followed other business: explanations, confidences and confessions. He confessed that after his intoxication over the photograph his love had suddenly turned to loathing when she snubbed him, that first day, in the ferryboat. Moreover, he tried to forget her as something far beyond his reach. He also confessed to a year of misery. His mother, after her interview with Octavia, had gone to Italy and he, without meeting her, had been called to America. And so Octavia's message, in a wander-

ing letter, had never reached him until he saw his mother four days ago. "And during all those months," he said, "I made a gallant effort to forget and despise you."

"No, no, darling boy! Please don't say that."

"But I did! And so deep was my hate, so bitter my contempt, that on getting from Mumsey even that frigid little message I started off at once and traveled day and night to get here."

Octavia laughed.

And Baseborn, in obvious approval, wagged his tail.

Octavia's smile, however, was followed by a frown. She began to readjust her tumbling hair, much disordered by her flight through the woods. "I am ashamed, humiliated, when I think of the mortifying way I ran into your arms."

"Mortifying! It was heavenly."

"No! It was horrible! And how differently I had planned our meeting!"

"Never was earthly meeting happier! Let's do it again!"

When she frowned and shook her head he asked, "But how had you planned it?"

"In a dignified and proper way, of course."

"Disgusting idea!" he exclaimed. "Cold-blooded and commonplace."

"I intended to reach home about half an hour before you called. That would give me time to prink a little. When you were announced I should let you

wait a few minutes—not too long, but just long enough for you to realize that your visit was of no special importance; no more remarkable than any other visit."

"What a mean woman!"

"I should, of course, express regret for the injustice I did you regarding the note in Pandora's box. But I should have done it discreetly; in a friendly way but not—not too encouraging."

Ethan closed his eyes. "It makes me cold and weak to think of it."

"And you would have gone away in doubt."

He groaned, and rolled over on his back. "What fiendish cruelty!"

"And whether you returned or not would depend entirely on your own courage and perseverance."

"An all wise Providence and the god of love were both against you." And he moved from his reclining position and sat beside her, both resting against the tree.

Time flies quickly in the month of June when you are sitting under the greenwood tree beside the only woman in the world. An hour later, when shadows from the wood reached far across the lawn, even to the castle walls, still were they sitting,

One soul abiding in two bodies.

But all things end—except time and space—and so, after enjoyment all too brief of this celestial intimacy, they returned to earth. The reluctant

American climbed slowly to his feet, then helped the lady.

As she stood before him—a radiant figure against the somber depths of the forest—replacing her hat and struggling with loose locks of the gold brown hair, he stared in boyish rapture: and he proclaimed her the daintiest and most patrician, the most piquante, entrancing, delectable, the most bewildering and soul stirring of all created things. This statement she received with outward scorn, but with changing color in her cheeks. He insisted on its truth. And his admiration was so sincere, so enthusiastic, that Octavia became embarrassed.

"It is so true," he said, "so very true that it frightens me."

She laughed. "What frightens you? Is it I?"

"Yes, you. I am afraid it is all a dream."

In reply to an inquiring look he pointed to the castle whose taller towers were touched by a rosy light. The high, far reaching walls, the ivy clad battlements, the terraces and Elizabethan gables, all stood forth in shadowy, mysterious grandeur—a castle in fairyland.

"It is hard to believe that you should be willing to exchange such a home for—for me."

"For you! Why, darling boy, for you I would leave the world behind! But tell me, in America shall we live in one of those little houses I have read about, made of wood and painted white?"

"Only the richest Americans live in those houses.

Ours will be a log cabin, with Indians shooting arrows at us through the chinks."

"However rough the cabin or wide the chinks or many the arrows, I shall be contented."

Still looking into each other's eyes, he laid his hands behind her shoulders and drew her—

But why describe it? Why describe a custom more ancient than prehistoric man?

So near together were they standing, so very near, that Baseborn found difficulty in wedging himself between. He succeeded, however, and stood slapping his tail against the lady's skirts. A moment later, as Octavia again adjusted a fugitive lock, she looked down at Baseborn. "I go to America on one condition."

"Already granted, O Earth's Delight! And any others that you care to mention. What is this particular one?"

"That Baseborn go with us."

"Of course! And more than that: he shall be best man at the wedding."

Octavia smiled. But the smile died quickly away and her eyes rested sadly on the castle. "That wedding! I tremble for it."

"Oh, don't say my dream is ended—that you are repenting already!"

"No, I shall never do that! But you don't know my grandfather."

Uncertain as to how much Mrs. Lovejoy had told her son of this grandfather's history, Octavia merely

added, discreetly, "He is an iron-hearted despot, and he may object."

Ethan smiled, as if relieved. "Oh, is that all? I breathe again; for

> If you love me as I love you,
> No iron hearted despot
> Shall cut our love in two."

Still, her eyes were anxious. "But he has always had his own way. And his temper! No one faces him in his anger."

"Face him! With you at stake I would face a platoon of grandfathers."

Brave words were these. Signs of trouble still lingered, however, on Octavia's brow. "But worst of all is my father. Do you know him?"

"I have seen him once, when I presented my letter of introduction from the architects."

"How did he impress you?"

"Well, I am not likely to revile him in the presence of my newly acquired girl."

"Be serious."

Ethan hesitated. "He was very polite—courtesy itself. His manners, I fancy, are always perfect."

"Always."

"He did strike me, however, as a man who might be a good fighter. Also, I should say, that while a somewhat easy going man of the world, he would, if once resolved on a thing, be a trifle firmer than the rock of ages."

"Yes, and the one thing on which he is more

firmly resolved than all others is that I shall marry a man of exalted title, of great wealth and position, and that he shall be an Englishman."

Ethan closed his eyes and drew a long breath. "Are there any such among the present suitors?"

"Three. There are four, really, but the prince is a German and dad told me to discourage him."

As her eyes looked sadly into his he inquired, cheerfully, "And what do you propose to do?"

"Oh, I don't know! I fear all kinds of trouble."

"Fear nothing. Neither your father nor anyone else has the slightest right, legal, moral, financial, or parental, to sell you at auction to pay their own debts. You are now my property. If I am too feeble to hold you I shall deserve whatever comes. Your father and your grandfather are not the only men who can hold their own. Moreover, as my cause is just and theirs is mercenary, I am three times stronger than the two together."

"Are all Americans such boasters?"

"Possibly. We may be barbaric, but we are not collapsible."

He looked into her troubled eyes with a smile so serenely confident that in spite of her misgivings she shared, for the moment, his irrepressible courage. Then, more earnestly, and with a quiet force that carried conviction, he said, "My love for you is so far above what others think or say or do, so much stronger than any human opposition, that if your love for me is one tenth of mine—"

"Oh, you know it is!"

"Then no human power shall part us. I am yours and you are mine, and what is mine I hold. Have no fears. To make you happy will be from this day my first ambition, my sacred duty, my greatest joy. And when I undertake a thing, that is humanly possible, I see it through."

Remembering his rescue—seemingly impossible—of Sally Pindar, she made no reply save a quiet smile of faith.

Baseborn, meanwhile, with a singular want of delicacy—for a dog—stood staring up into their faces. And when he expressed his disapproval by a half suppressed but not unfriendly growl, both lovers laughed aloud; and Octavia stooped and patted him. "You are a good chaperon, dear hero, and I am ashamed of myself."

Slowly and sadly Ethan wagged his head. "Dear hero! Baseborn, you have my sympathy. Even I was a hero once, and my fall was sudden, and far—as I had predicted."

"But Baseborn is not presuming and impertinent. He is not American."

Meanwhile, the rosy light that touched the towers of Drumworth Castle was slowly fading. The hour of parting was at hand. This painful ceremony, needlessly prolonged, was accompanied by clasping of hands with further gazing into each other's faces, possibly for future identification. A stranger wit-

nessing this scene might have supposed the lady about starting for the Sandwich Islands, the man for Siberia. Whereas, the ceremony finished, they walked off together, across the lawn.

At the door of the castle occurred another farewell, but more formal—merely a pressure of the hand and a final look into each other's faces. And in Octavia's eyes Ethan Lovejoy found what his own declared, and what he most desired—an unwavering faith.

XXIX

DARKENING SKIES

WHEN a sensitive woman, not yet recovered from an illness, indulges in a paralyzing terror, an hysterical flight through treacherous woods, all to conclude with a mortifying encounter for which she is unprepared, then surely there is cause for fatigue; and reason for repose.

So, on the following day, Octavia remained in her own chamber. The ordeal for which she was bracing herself demanded not only all her courage but more strength, perhaps, than she possessed. It was, in truth, a serious thing to announce a degrading misalliance to such a person as Auntie George. No dragon ever watched a treasure with sharper eye than Auntie George had watched Octavia. All unbefitting suitors had been crushed at the outer wall. But this dread of Auntie George, itself unnerving, seemed a trivial thing beside the fury of a vindictive grandfather whose hatred of the name of Ethan Lovejoy was so bitter, so relentless and undying that none dared whisper it in his presence. More dreaded than all, and not to be avoided, was the authority of an ambitious and determined parent.

As the Duchess of Linsmere was to dine with

them that evening Octavia decided to defer the dreaded interview. On second thoughts, however, she changed her mind. For the Duchess of Linsmere, although mother of the suitor favored by both families, was kinder, gentler and more forgiving than her own iron-hearted relatives. To her father she had despatched a letter the previous afternoon. Letters are less nerve destroying in certain emergencies than personal interviews.

After dinner the old earl went off for his smoke, leaving the three ladies in the library. Baseborn remained with the ladies. Sentence of death had been hastily cancelled after his exploit of yesterday. His heroism on the field of battle, together with his generalship in covering Octavia's retreat, had aroused the liveliest admiration throughout the entire Drumworth household. Even Auntie George did not conceal her gratitude.

Octavia fired the opening gun. Reclining unconcernedly in an easy chair, stroking with the toe of her slipper the recumbent Baseborn, she remarked carelessly, in much the same tone as she would have commented on the weather;

"I am engaged to be married."

Auntie George, always erect—even in repose—leaned forward, a sudden joy in her mirthless eyes. The face of the duchess also brightened, for nothing was dearer to this mother than her son's happiness. Yet, in the girl's manner was a faint suggestion of bravado, an air of almost tragic indif-

ference not habitual with bearers of joyful tidings. In a low voice, almost tremulous with hope, the duchess murmured, "Is it Ned?"

"No. It is Ethan Lovejoy."

This name, for the briefest moment, had no significance to Octavia's audience. So seldom had it been whispered since a long ago, fateful night that now it struck on unexpecting ears as the resurrection of a buried evil. Auntie George's eyes rested on Octavia in a doubting stare. And these cold, unwinking eyes were saying that if this was a joke it was in hideous taste. The Duchess of Linsmere, unable to comprehend, looked searchingly and sadly into Octavia's face.

For a moment there was silence; so strained, so ill-omened and unendurable, that Octavia began to speak. She gave the outlines of her story. And as she spoke, and looked into the listening faces, she fully realized that to these two friends she was dealing the cruellest blow that it was in her power to give. When she ceased speaking there was another silence, even more disheartening. The Duchess of Linsmere had sunk back in her chair, motionless, with closed eyes. Auntie George tried to speak, but her voice failed her. She cleared her throat and tried again.

"Of course you are aware, Octavia, that, should you do this incredible thing you would be throwing into the gutter, as it were, your birth and position; all that make you what you are."

"No. Those things, Auntie George, do not make me what I am."

"You would give up your country, your own people—for—for—such a person?"

"Yes."

"And live in poverty?"

"I will live in poverty."

"And work, perhaps, with your own hands."

"Yes, and cheerfully—with him."

Auntie George drew a deep breath. She stared at Octavia in silent wonder. This matter was beyond her comprehension. She was astounded, shocked, mortified—too sick at heart to be angry. She hoped—or almost hoped—that Octavia might be insane; legally unsound in mind, and so avert this shame. Better insanity, or death, than dishonor. But these thoughts were not expressed. When again she spoke her voice was low, and calm.

"You know your father has very ambitious plans for you."

"Yes, I know."

"He will forbid it, of course."

"Of course."

"You will be very courageous if you try to disobey him."

Octavia made no answer.

"You will be the first woman of your family to stoop—quite so low."

"So low! Are not architects respectable?"

"Yes. So are barbers and policemen, but women of your station do not marry them."

Then the duchess spoke, more gently than Auntie George. "It is hard to imagine you, dear child, living in a land where your only companions are Americans, whose restless wives we see swarming over Europe, leaving their husbands at home. The only women who stay quietly at home, I am told, are those who cannot afford to travel."

This was old news to Octavia and she made no denial. However, she answered, with a smile;

"If those women are so obnoxious I shall be all the happier when they go to other countries."

Slowly and sadly the duchess shook her head. "You remember, perhaps, what our own ambassador says of society in the States. Like dust in a workshop: what is down today is up tomorrow."

"Yes. I remember."

"And I am afraid, my dear child, that you are too young to realize what it means to live among those people: to forego all the refinements of good society; to have for your daily associates persons whose highest ambition is money, and what it buys. I know several Americans. The only reason for their presence among people of our class is their monstrous wealth. But this architect, I presume, is far from rich, or he would not be an architect."

"I am willing, as I say, to live simply."

"Simply, yes, but are you prepared for a lifelong struggle against humiliating economies—and obscurity?"

"If I love my husband."

Of this crazy speech Auntie George had an opinion, but she refrained from uttering it. A faint, patrician snort, almost wholly suppressed, was her only comment. After a moment's pause, she said, with more than usual sweetness, "I have always understood that Americans are much addicted to catarrh, dyspepsia and nervous prostration. Is this architect healthy?"

"He seems to be."

Then Auntie George, whose spine never relaxed, became a trifle more erect, her nose a trifle more pinched, her lips a trifle tighter. "You will pardon the question, under the circumstances, but is this—this Mr. Lovejoy a gentleman?"

A flush came to Octavia's cheeks. Quietly, however, she answered:

"No. His manners are brutish. To women they are insulting. He chews tobacco. He has no education, talks through his nose and cannot speak grammatically. He eats with his fingers. No gentleman could associate with him. No honest family would admit him to its home."

Auntie George raised her chin. "You are pleased, Octavia, to be facetious in a matter that is more than regrettable. It is tragic."

"Yes, my child," murmured the duchess, sadly. "It is tragic. My heart bleeds for you."

Impulsively Octavia stood up, then she went over and dropped on her knees before the duchess and pressed one of that lady's hands against her cheek.

"It needn't bleed for me, Auntie Laura. He is as fine and true a gentleman as there is in England, or anywhere else. And he is high minded, strong, ambitious, kind and—oh, so much wiser than I am! You will like him, Auntie Laura. You can't help it."

"I hope you are not deceived."

"I have had a year to think it over."

"And you have no misgivings? Be truthful."

"Not one. You think I should marry a richer man to keep the castle; but other girls marry the men they love. Why should not I? Why should I, because I am an only child, pay the debts of the family, and sell myself to do it?"

"A woman in your position," said Auntie George, her chin well in the air, "is expected to make certain sacrifices. One cannot enjoy the privileges of noble birth and ignore its duties. To a person of honor there are solemn obligations."

To the weary, kneeling girl—exhausted and spent with emotion—these words of "honor" and "solemn obligations" fell with torturing force. Uttering a moan of despair she bowed her face in her hands, on the Duchess of Linsmere's knees. Then, with convulsive sobs came a flood of tears.

This exhibition of misery was welcomed by Auntie George as a sign of promise. It brought into her face a look—not tender, but less flinty—as she gazed upon the weeping girl. While consoled by the knowledge that both father and grandfather would

never tolerate the possibility of such a degrading marriage she sincerely pitied Octavia in her sorrow and disappointment. Although indignant at the girl's shameless abasement, her affection was sincere and unselfish. But no affection of which Auntie George was capable could ever cope with the dominating interest of her life—a reverence deep and holy for persons of gentle birth—herself included. She enjoyed, of course, a corresponding aversion to the lower orders of humanity. And of these was Ethan Lovejoy. The Duchess of Linsmere, although enjoying similar opinions, was less positive. Being of a gentler nature and with broader sympathies she had mastered a few simple human truths that were forbidden to trespass on Auntie George's mental reservations. And now she stroked with caressing fingers the bowed head upon her knees, and murmured consolation.

Her words of consolation, however, abruptly ceased. The caressing fingers, as if caught in a guilty act, became motionless. The eyes of the two ladies had moved, in sudden consternation, to the doorway, where stood the tall, grim figure of the Earl of Drumworth. He advanced a few steps, then raised the bushy grey eyebrows in surprise as he looked down upon the kneeling figure.

"What is it?" demanded his fingers.

Auntie George looked toward the duchess, hoping to escape the explanation. But the duchess, in turn, looked toward Auntie George; for this man's anger,

well known through all the countryside, was a thing to be avoided. Auntie George cleared her throat. Her voice, when it came, was lower than usual, and wavering:

"Octavia is engaged to be married."

At these words Octavia, divining the situation, rose suddenly to her feet, took a backward step behind the chair of the duchess, and faced her grandfather.

On the earl's lips came the faint resemblance to a smile. But it was thirty-three years since a smile had visited these lips, and smiles are rarely successful in unfamiliar territory. So, this present expression, although an indication of welcome news, was merely the outward sign of a relapse from habitual gloom. Even promised rescue from financial ruin could bring no brighter display.

"To whom?" inquired the fingers.

Auntie George hesitated. The courage to utter the forbidden name was the kind of courage she did not possess. Nervously she glanced toward Octavia. In that young woman's tear stained face she saw a look that filled her with a new dismay. The girl, erect and rigid, her chin up, her eyes resting steadily on her grandfather, seemed a living statue of reckless courage and defiance. In a voice more choked by recent tears than by fear, she answered calmly;

"His name is Ethan Lovejoy."

For an instant the Earl of Drumworth seemed

not to understand. Then, beneath the contracting brows the cold eyes blinked. His jaw moved, spasmodically, as if uttering words. It was evident that he did not believe; that he doubted his own ears. The fingers repeated, this time confusedly, with jerks almost beyond control;

"To whom?"

"Ethan Lovejoy. An American—an architect who was working here—in the old hall—last year."

The earl's eyes as they glared upon Octavia were blinking slowly with an overwhelming astonishment; with incredulity; then anger. His face, in the uncertain light from the various lamps about the room, seemed to lose its color. More slowly, now, the fingers moved, shaking with a rising passion.

"Not the—you do not mean—"

"Yes," and Octavia was startled by her own courage—"the son of—the one you knew."

Then occurred a thing so unexpected, so miraculous, so beyond belief, that the three women opened wide their eyes in wonder. From those ever silent lips through which no sound had issued in many years, came a voice. It was an unnatural sound, an unknown voice; a voice completely forgotten by the speaker, and by his hearers. Although prolonged, as if words were in his brain, no definite word was uttered. It was the outburst of an ungoverned rage that broke its barriers.

Baseborn, now promoted from condemned criminal to guardian angel, and from whom the power

of speech was also withheld, said nothing. But he seemed to understand, and he trotted over to Octavia's side. He could read no message from the angry fingers, but the sound was ominous.

Toward Octavia the earl advanced, and in his face there was a look these women had seen before. It brought Auntie George to her feet, and she stepped in front of him with outstretched, protesting hands. He stopped. Again his jaw moved—or rather twitched—as if striving for speech. But Fate had otherwise decreed. No further sound ever issued from his lips. Moving backward a step, to allow Octavia free passage from the room, he pointed to the door.

"To your chamber," said the fingers of the other hand.

From beside the duchess's chair Octavia stepped forward; not hurriedly, as a frightened child, but leisurely, with dignity and self possession, as if entering a ball room. Out of the library she passed, without regarding her grandfather.

At her heels walked Baseborn.

XXX

FROM FATHER TO SON?

BUT Octavia did not go to her chamber. Through the hall she walked, out into the night. There, on the terrace, she stood for a moment, looking up at the heavens.

From the east, beyond the Old Hall, came the soft, far reaching glow from a rising moon. The tranquil beauty of this night, while bringing no encouragement, seemed, by its peace and splendor, to glorify her own misery. For a moment she closed her eyes. She sought comfort by inhaling the dewy, sweet smelling air. But the air of night is never joyous: the greater its beauty, the sadder your thoughts. So found Octavia. In this beauty of a perfect night she breathed only a soothing sadness.

Descending the broad steps she moved along the terrace, then through her own garden. Pushing open the little door she passed on to the cloistered arches. Through the silent darkness of these arches, she walked with throbbing heart, but unafraid. It seemed, however, a longer journey than ever before. The presence of Baseborn, close behind, gave courage. In yesterday's crisis he had shown the quality

of his devotion: also his ability to defend. Now, the patter of his feet behind her upon the stone floor of the cloisters, cheered flagging muscles and a weary heart.

At last, from beneath the yet darker archway, she stepped forth into the Garden of the Sleeping Beauty, now illumined by a large, round moon, just appearing above the balustrade. She seemed entering another world—a world of peace and security: as a frail, weary, storm-driven craft when it reaches harbor.

Ethan Lovejoy, with a cry of welcome, sprang up from the Kosyie Benche and came toward her. Into his arms she walked. Then, as they closed about her, the storm-driven craft felt safe at last—snug harbored.

With that fine consideration which often surprises us in untitled persons, Baseborn stole silently away, and vanished in the surrounding gloom.

When, after a reasonable lapse of time, Octavia began gently to disengage herself, there followed, leisurely, in no haste, a touching of lips; he with both hands holding the moonlit face. It was that time honored rite of measureless antiquity, that breathing of two souls in one, where the gentler yields, and the other, with overflowing heart, receives from the lips of the woman he most desires the silent avowal of surrender.

And this ecstatic rite, this consecration, was all in harmony with the calm, soft light from the

rising moon—a moonlight heavy with the perfume of old box and roses. Among the mysterious shadows of the neglected garden, in this fragrance of forgotten flowers, might well be hovering the souls of other lovers, long since departed.

Gently, by a supporting arm, Octavia was led to the Kosyie Benche. Upon this bench—too wide for one, but for two a perfect fit—the lovers sat. And when they were comfortably adjusted there ensued a silence of perfect content. This silence was broken at last by Ethan; and there was anxiety in his tone.

"You poor girl! How you tremble! Your hands are cold and your cheeks are hot."

Then Octavia's nerves, upheld by force of will, gave way. Her head fell against his shoulder. And again, the second time that evening, she wept.

But the marble cupid, lit up by the rising moon, still danced in wanton joy, regardless of anxious lovers in his vicinity.

With overwrought nerves and breaking voice Octavia began the story of the ill omened interview in the library between Auntie George, the Duchess of Linsmere, and herself. As she went on, however, she found strength and comfort in the compassionate but ever hopeful Ethan.

"Do you never lose courage?" she exclaimed. "Does nothing depress you? Have you no misgivings, ever—about anything?"

He laughed. "If I had I should hide them from myself."

"How can you laugh! It is like laughing at a funeral."

"Well, it's mine, if anybody's. A man may laugh at his own funeral."

"And mine, too, darling boy, as much as yours!"

In a more serious tone he said: "Now listen, Heavenly Thing. If there's a funeral it will be a funeral of blasted hopes; the hopes of a selfish family that failed to sell its daughter to the highest bidder. But go on with the story, and don't omit anything on my account. My feelings are far beyond the reach of Auntie George—or the loving grandfather."

"Yes, he is horrible," murmured Octavia with a shudder. "But I fear him far less than my father; for dad is saner, and a stronger man. And he too has an awful will; and he is so—so—determined I shall make a brilliant match. Oh, I have no idea how it will all end!"

"Don't worry. It will all end well. You are not a child to be—"

A sound not far away brought Ethan to his feet. The tall, grim figure of that grandfather whose name had just passed Octavia's lips was coming toward them. And his walk was of one in haste. Octavia also rose, and clutched Ethan's sleeve. The approaching man, hard visaged and grimmer than ever in the moonlight, was more threatening, more savagely vindictive than Octavia had known him. There was something startling in the glitter of his

"—STILL DANCED IN WANTON JOY—"

eyes, partly, perhaps, from the colorless light of the moon. From the twitching of the overhanging eyebrows and his jaw he seemed insane with rage. Within arm's length of the lovers he came, stopped, and with a swift, peremptory gesture beckoned his granddaughter to his side. But the old earl's face at this moment would have sent dismay to a bolder heart than Octavia's. Instead of obeying the command she shrunk back, instinctively, and clung yet tighter to Ethan's arm. This defiance of his authority so inflamed a passion already beyond control, that he raised his arm, took a forward step and with a sudden, unexpected movement brought down his fist, well aimed for Octavia's head. So quickly was it done that it reached its mark; but its force was weakened by another blow, equally rapid, that landed on his own chest. And it came with a vigor that sent the Earl of Drumworth reeling backward, backward—and still further backward. Back among the flowers he staggered, always striving, but in vain, to recover his equilibrium. At last a rose bush caught a foot, and held it. Then he tumbled, always backward, his head, as he fell, striking the pedestal of the dancing cupid.

As consciousness faded he stared with straining eyes at the woman—and at the man who struck him. With his vanishing senses, years also vanished. Was he living again—here in the same garden, with the same tranquil, mocking moon? Was he living again that fateful evening, long ago, when this—

or another—Ethan Lovejoy—defended—a—Drumworth woman?

But this moment's illusions of the Earl of Drumworth were never reported. The sensations of the other man were yet more bewildering, and not so easily explained. In silence, as if spellbound, he stood gazing at the face of the fallen man as it rested, in startling relief, against the base of the sportive god.

Octavia laid a trembling hand on Ethan's arm, peered up into his eyes and whispered:

"Are you hurt?"

He made no answer, still staring, as if dazed, at the pallid face against the pedestal.

"Are you hurt?" she repeated. "Did he strike you?"

"No. But I have that—that unaccountable feeling we spoke of last year, in the old hall, and on this bench, of passing through the same experience at some other period of my life. Only now—"

And he closed his eyes as if to collect his thoughts. "Only now it is so strong, so astoundingly real! an almost positive knowledge that I have done this thing before, here, in the moonlight, in this very garden. I seem to be living it all over again—a second time."

He spoke in a low tone, as if in awe. For yonder white face, with its slowly closing eyes, seemed a link between himself and some shadowy past, too remote for memory's call. Through Octavia's brain flashed the memory of his mother's—and his fath-

er's—adventure on this very spot, an adventure absolutely similar in every detail.

For a moment she also stood silent. Could it be that this mental record of a scene was inherited? That a profound impression on the father's brain was transmitted to the son and registered in his own brain as his own experience, now awakened into life by the event itself?

But she could not divulge these thoughts without violating her promise to his mother. Startled by what appeared an almost supernatural coincidence she stood closer yet to Ethan's side. And she, too, gazed in wonder at the dancing cupid and the ghostly figure at its base.

XXXI

A TOUCH OF FATE

AFTER the departure of Octavia and her grandfather there was solemn conversation in the library between Auntie George and the Duchess of Linsmere. The duchess had been crushed by Octavia's announcement. Her sorrow was deep, as if the disgrace had befallen her own daughter. Auntie George's grief was relieved by anger. It was also alleviated by hope, as she had confidence in the unbending will of Octavia's father. He would arrive this evening—at any moment. And Lady Georgiana knew that few daughters of human clay would oppose the will of such a father as Lord Aylesden when he was once in earnest.

There came to this lady's lips a smile—not a tender smile—as she looked forward to the approaching exhibition of this parent's feelings. For his most serious ambition, in fact the one serious purpose of his life, was a splendid alliance for Octavia. So, while mortified by Octavia's delusion, Auntie George found solace in the prospect of the coming victory.

The two ladies had been sitting a half-hour or more in subdued but excited communion when a sound in the hall brought silence.

Octavia, whom they believed in her chamber, came running into the castle from the terrace and went straight to the telephone. The telephone was in a far corner, near the stairs; but they heard her message to Dr. Wherry.

"Come as quickly as you can. Grandfather has fallen and struck his head against a stone in the garden. He is unconscious. Oh, do hurry!"

Out into the hall hastened the two ladies. They saw the Earl of Drumworth, supported by another man, entering slowly from the terrace. Upon this man he was leaning heavily, with half closed eyes. Into the library they led him, and placed him in his own arm chair. Then, slowly, he raised his head until it rested against the high back of the chair. Slowly, also, the eyes opened and he looked about, still dazed, and not fully comprehending.

With these signs of recovery the Duchess of Linsmere and Auntie George found a moment to study the invader. It was not the moment for formal introductions, nor were they needed. Both women suspected who the stranger was, and their suspicions were correct.

They found him a tall and lean young man, rather muscular and "bony," dressed in grey, like many other men; not handsome, but not quite so impossibly vulgar as they expected. He seemed more con-

cerned about the injured man than any impression he was making upon the ladies present.

The old earl's eyes, with returning senses, moved drowsily over the group about him until they rested on Ethan's face. Then, a lowering of the eyebrows and a twitching of the mouth. From the lips came no words, but if it is possible for eyes to bestow a curse, then the look from this much punished man delivered whatever message the dumb lips failed to utter. This hostile glance, overflowing with hate and vindictive promise, was followed by rapid motions of his fingers.

Octavia, the deepest distress in her face, looked up at Ethan who was standing beside her. He returned the look with a smile. The smile, while hardly perceptible, was calmly confident.

"Was he addressing me?" he inquired.

Octavia nodded.

"What does he say?"

The girl's lips parted, but her voice failed. The words seemed to choke her. Tears came to her eyes and she pressed a tremulous hand against a cheek.

"Never mind," said Ethan, gently. "It didn't look very friendly and I can get along nicely without it."

But Auntie George's nerves were firmer than those of her niece. Moreover, her heart was not torn by needless sympathy. Looking the intruder steadily in the eye she spoke in the clearest of tones:

"He tells you, sir, that the son of such a mother has no place in this house."

"My mother?"

"You certainly can comprehend why any reminder of your mother in this family is—offensive."

"Offensive! I have not the slightest comprehension, madam, of what is in your mind!"

Auntie George's glance rested for an instant upon the Duchess of Linsmere as if for aid in replying to this brazen assurance. But the Duchess of Linsmere was gazing at Ethan more in pity than in anger. Auntie George half closed her eyes as if wearied by the invader's mendacity.

"Do you wish us to believe that you know nothing of your own mother?"

"On the contrary I know much about my own mother. I know there is no better woman in the world."

At these words Auntie George actually quivered with anger. "Indeed! Then it is your opinion that wives who desert their lawful husbands to run away with their lovers are the best of women?"

These words awakened a memory in Ethan. After his father's death he had found, among some business papers, a letter from Bridgewater, England. The writer had alluded to some man—the name not given—from whom his mother had fled because of a brutal act. Ethan had never mentioned this letter to his mother as he suspected she wished something in her past forgotten. But, since reading that letter, whenever he saw a certain scar on his mother's face there came a strong desire for a meeting, in a fair field, with the man who had given it.

Although Auntie George's manner was even more stinging than her words Ethan answered calmly:

"Your opinion of my mother was neither asked nor desired. I happen to know that she escaped from a murderous brute, obtained a divorce in America and married a good man."

"A murderous brute!" repeated Auntie George.

The Earl of Drumworth brought down a fist upon the table. But Ethan observed him not. His eyes were on Auntie George as he inquired:

"If a man who can strike a woman to the floor, then kick her face as she lies at his feet—if he is not a murderous brute, what is he? What better name can you—or anybody else—suggest?"

Auntie George's face was white as she answered:

"Bravely spoken, sir! I like your courage; the courage to insult a man much older than yourself in his own home, in the presence of his family."

"When have I ever done so?"

"Perhaps you will tell us next—" with a gesture toward the Earl of Drumworth—"that you do not know who this gentleman is?"

"Certainly I do."

"Quite a confession! But you had no suspicion, of course, that your mother was once his wife."

The surprise that came into Ethan's face was real, —far too real for possibility of doubt. In incredulous wonder his eyes remained, an instant, on the speaker's face. Astounded and in silence he stared blankly at the old earl. Then, still doubting, his

eyes moved slowly to the Duchess of Linsmere; and finally to Octavia. From Octavia came an answering look with a slight movement of the head—confirming the words. Into Ethan's eyes and in the tightening of his mouth, Octavia saw, with dismay, the same look that had come into his face when he left her yesterday, to meet the man in the woods. He took one step forward, nearer the earl. In a tone of suppressed anger, bitterly contemptuous, he said, slowly, with trenchant emphasis on the final word:

"So, you—are the—*gentleman!*"

The words were few; but the manner of their utterance, vibrant with unspeakable contempt, more insulting far than volumes of abuse, seemed to furnish a sudden strength that lifted the proud old man to his feet. He leaned upon the table at his side, shaking with passion. Had the Earl of Drumworth even his usual strength there would have followed yet another personal encounter. That the son of that pair, a pair forever damned, instead of apologizing for his existence should take the rôle of accuser, was a thing monstrous and unbearable. One hand upon the table to steady the swaying frame, the fingers of the other hand shot forth a message. The message was ignored. For an appealing gesture from Octavia, at his side, caused Ethan to retreat a step and turn toward her. The gesture and Octavia's anxious face ended the scene between the two men. Forgetting apparently the other persons

present, Ethan took the protesting hand, and held it. Looking down into her frightened face he tried to smile. But the recent anger was too strong to be so easily suppressed.

Octavia saw the effort, understood the struggle and she too, almost smiled. These defeated smiles, however, served to emphasize the blessed truth, that so long as there was peace and perfect understanding between Ethan and Octavia all else was unimportant.

From this brief oblivion to a hostile neighborhood they were swiftly recalled. The earl's fist again upon the table—a blow that rattled the porcelain shades of a heavy lamp—drew their eyes to the moving fingers of his other hand. These fingers of an outstretched arm were dancing with infuriate haste. The Earl of Drumworth was not in the habit of being ignored, and the fingers were now delivering a message that was more than emphatic. It was also clear to Ethan that the message was for himself. It was so abusive of himself and his motives, so insulting to his father and his mother, that the Duchess of Linsmere lowered her eyes to avoid it; and Octavia, anguish in her face, shrank back with a moan of horror. When the fingers ceased—clenched in a shaking fist, still extended toward the victim—Ethan turned to Octavia, inquiring, by a look, the meaning of it all. But while Octavia hesitated, Auntie George again took up the burden. But

even Auntie George appeared to shrink from a full translation.

"He tells you, sir, among other things, to leave this house and never enter it again."

As she delivered this cordial message, Auntie George made little effort to conceal a triumphant satisfaction. And her eyes, as they rested frigidly on those of the recipient, expressed the natural contempt of a lady of quality for a person of the lowest origin, thwarted in his villainy.

Ethan's eyebrows moved slightly upwards as he looked down upon the erect, rigid little figure. With an inclination of his head, ceremoniously polite, he murmured:

"Thank you."

Then, moving yet closer to Octavia, he spoke in a voice too low for others to hear: "Don't worry. Take a rest tomorrow. When you are ready to see me leave a note in Pandora's box."

With a pressure of her nearest hand he backed away a step, toward the door. With a bow that included the entire battle front of the enemy—the two dames and the glowering earl—he was about to depart when Auntie George spoke again.

"Kindly wait a moment, sir. There is a gentleman in the hall who desires a word with you."

This lady's expectant ears had been the first to hear an approaching motor and the closing of an outer door. Her words were followed by a silence

—a silence almost unbearable to Octavia; solemn and portentous to Ethan.

This silence was broken by approaching footsteps in the hall. These footsteps, firm, decisive, rapid, were those of a man wasting no time before accomplishing his purpose. To Octavia it seemed the tread of the executioner. With every footfall her heart beat fainter. Vainly she tried to control a sudden weakness of her limbs. Dreading a collapse of nerves already overstrained, she sank into the nearest chair. Upon Ethan Lovejoy Auntie George's slowly winking eyes rested in pious enjoyment of Virtue's triumph over Knavery.

When Lord Aylesden stepped into the room he found himself the center of a surprising group. His reception, also, was surprising. There were no words of welcome. Even his daughter had no greeting for him. He stood for a moment in a funereal silence—the very silence of the tomb. After a brief survey of the semi circle of faces—five pairs of eyes all watching him with solemn earnestness—his own expression became graver yet. To Octavia, his jaw, always too heavy, seemed more than ever like her grandfather's.

"What's the matter?" he inquired. "Is there a death in the family?"

Auntie George at this hour of triumph, while inwardly jubilant, felt a touch of pity for Octavia. And her voice became a trifle—just a trifle—less metallic as she asked:

"Did you not receive my telegram?"

"Yes. Also Octavia's letter. And here I am."

His father, at this point, rapped sharply on the table for attention, then pointed a quivering finger at Ethan Lovejoy. For Ethan, in stepping backward from the doorway, was now standing almost behind the new arrival.

Lord Aylesden, in obedience to the finger, turned his head. Then followed an act frequently witnessed, and usually of small importance. But on this occasion it drove the color from Auntie George's cheeks. It brought to her face a look of horror, then of incredulity. She gasped, and seemed to utter an exclamation. But it died in a whisper. The eyes of the Duchess of Linsmere opened wide in wonder. And the act imparted a sudden galvanic power to the legs of the Earl of Drumworth that almost raised him from the floor. As for Octavia, she doubted her own ears—and eyes.

The deed that caused these mad emotions was a simple thing and calmly done. When the avenging parent turned and saw the man behind him, his face lit up with the smile that often redeemed a rather cold and unresponsive face. And he extended a hand in friendly greeting toward the astonished suitor.

"Mr. Lovejoy! Pardon me. I did not see you. So you and Octavia have been stealing a march on us."

As Ethan took the proffered hand, too amazed to speak, Auntie George recovered her voice. "Robert!" she exclaimed. "Are you crazy?"

Lord Aylesden smiled: "No, I hope not."

The Earl of Drumworth, to draw his son's attention, brought down upon the table at his side, and with all his energy, a heavy paper cutter, shattering the ivory handle as it struck. Then, in vehement rage, his fingers twitched. When their action ceased the son moved his head as if agreeing with the fingers.

"Yes, I know who he is. And I have looked him up. According to all accounts he is the most superior person—after George Washington—that America has produced. And, after all, we had better forget the past. Moreover, he is well able to—"

With both hands uplifted the father stopped him. Again began the fingers. And again Ethan divined the question from its answer.

"I know," said Lord Aylesden, and his manner became more serious. "I know all. Your feelings are respected. But I am sure we prefer having the Drumworth acres and the castle belong to the mother of Octavia's husband, rather than to Mr. Levi Goldberg."

Auntie George swallowed—to recover her voice—and when it came it seemed hoarse, and weak. "Kindly tell us what you mean."

Lord Aylesden joined his hands behind him, fixed his eyes upon Baseborn—to avoid seeing his

father's face, a face eloquent with rage, although the lips were dumb—and he spoke slowly. "I mean that Mr. Lovejoy's mother now holds the mortgage. In other words, she has practically purchased the Drumworth estate."

At these words four pairs of wondering eyes were turned upon Ethan Lovejoy. His own eyes, also in wonder, rested on the speaker.

"Moreover," said Lord Aylesden, "I suspect that she intends giving it to her son."

The sudden strength which had lifted the old earl to his feet seemed as suddenly to depart. His knees bent, and he sank down into his seat. With both hands clutching the arms of the chair, his head dropped forward. But the hostile eyes beneath the overhanging brows remained fixed on Ethan's face —on the face of this woman-stealer; the thieving son of a thieving father.

Octavia, radiant with surprise and joy, had moved to Ethan's side. In her eyes, however, was a shade of reproof as she murmured: "You never told me of your mother being so dreadfully rich."

He made a gesture of apology. "You never asked me. But I had no idea she was up to such mischief."

Lord Aylesden smiled. "Good mischief that gives you Drumworth castle for a home!"

Octavia, with glistening eyes, came up to her father and twined her arms around his neck. "Oh, dad, you have made me so happy—so happy!"

His only reply was to press his lips to her forehead. Then Ethan gulped. And being unable to conceal his joy he forgot his environment for an instant and looked about him with an involuntary smile. Entirely by accident this smile extended to the Earl of Drumworth. The sinister glare from beneath those frowning brows would have driven any ordinary smile to a sunless death. But this smile was far from ordinary. It was a message of unlimited rapture to the world at large, silent but inextinguishable. From the hating earl Ethan's eyes moved amiably toward Auntie George and rested, still smiling, upon that lady's polar countenance. Her stiff, erect little figure had become yet stiffer and yet more erect. Her thin lips were so tightly compressed as to be invisible. Her face seemed to be growing smaller, whiter and more determined. For, in whatever concerned Octavia, Auntie George was unselfish—unselfish to the full capacity of her highly respectable soul. And it was better for Octavia that Drumworth Castle should be owned and occupied by a stranger than the family honor dragged in the mud by an alliance with this offspring of a shameless, runaway mother. So, she returned the lover's impersonal smile with a stare of measureless disdain. But Ethan, at this moment, was impervious to any human snub. He lowered his eyes, still smiling, to Baseborn's less patrician but more responsive face. And so far as a dog can return a smile Baseborn did it.

Moreover, he arose, in front, and rested his forepaws against Ethan's legs, thus making it clearly understood that he shared the feelings of his friend, whatever their nature and whatever the occasion.

The old earl closed his eyes. Lower still he bent his head beneath the Fate that jeers at human hopes. In his brain were thoughts unuttered—and unutterable. Had his curses come home to roost? Was this the harvest?—the harvest of thirty years of unrelenting hate that had followed, day and night, over distant seas and unknown lands, one Ethan Lovejoy and his stolen bride? Could the jeering Fate devise a sharper blow?

The answer was standing before him in the son of that execrated pair.

And this second Ethan Lovejoy—the owner of Drumworth Castle!

And his bride—Octavia!

XXXII

INSPIRATION

AUNTIE GEORGE was not fond of reptiles. Her loathing for ignoble things was positive and unchangeable. So, the next morning, when forced to greet Ethan Lovejoy in the library, to smile and to shake hands with him, there was call for heroism—but she did it. Her smile, rightly interpreted by Ethan, was a malediction. Her cold fingers were swiftly withdrawn as from contact with a crocodile, a toad or a snake. A guest with a duller sense of humor might have been discomposed. But Ethan, this morning was in the highest heaven; far above earthly troubles. His own big heart had so expanded as to comprise the universe entire—at least the Drumworth universe. Little snubs from Auntie George were as snow-flakes beneath a July sun. Unlike the lady, he could have shaken hands with toads and crocodiles, and embraced Auntie George herself. But there came a surprise in the greeting from the Duchess of Linsmere. She, the greatest loser, whose only son had missed his one desire, could forgive the offender. She met him with a cordial smile, a warm pressure

of the hand, and an invitation to her own home.

The Earl of Drumworth did not appear. To confront with calmness or with self-possession this son of those impossible parents was beyond his powers. He remained in his own rooms. And he regaled himself in his solitude by chewing, with considerable violence, the cud of hate.

The two lovers motored to the station with Octavia's father. After returning to the castle, they started along the terrace, toward the Garden of the Sleeping Beauty. There was much to be said. And they said it.

Baseborn was along. And the joy of life was in him. To the limit of his capacity, which was great, he shared the happiness of his friends. He circled about them with reckless speed. At intervals, from the fulness of a bursting heart, he lifted up his voice. Ethan was far too happy this morning for any display of dignity. He picked flowers and gave them to Octavia with foolish speeches, not for publication here. His conversations with Baseborn—mostly about his fiancée—would have caused no astonishment to Lucy Lake, as coming from a kind but crazy gentleman. Octavia herself rebuked him with as much severity as is possible with a mirthful face: "How silly you are this morning! You behave like an overgrown boy."

Behind a hedge in Octavia's little garden he put an arm about her waist. With an upward glance toward the castle she drew away.

"Only angels can see us," said Ethan.

"What better reason for behaving ourselves?"

"Oh, come now! Are British angels prigs?"

She made no reply save a movement of the head, then walked on in front of him.

"Have lovers any rights?" he demanded.

Still she heeded him not, and he took her gently by the shoulders and turned her about. Looking gravely into her eyes he inquired:

"Do you forget the words of the Reverend Barley Koppsitt?"

"I never heard of him nor his words, and I don't care to hear about him now."

Still holding her shoulders, he repeated impressively:

> If a sniffty woman snubs you,
> Said the Reverend Barley Koppsitt,
> The nicest way to treat her is
> To kiss her till she stops it.

Octavia smiled, but with another cautious glance toward the castle walls. Then, looking down into the eyes that were watching this tête-à-tête with lively interest:

"Baseborn, are you no longer my protector? Won't you bite this American?"

But Baseborn, for once, ignored her request. And he, with his two followers, passed on through the little gate, along the cloistered arches.

When, from beneath the old archway, they

stepped forth into the Garden of the Sleeping Beauty, they stood silent for a moment in a mild enchantment:—as if re-entering Arcadia. For the old garden, and all that was in it, seemed greeting them this morning with a smile of welcome. The sky seemed bluer, the flowers gayer, the birds more joyous than ever before. There was a general air of rejoicing. The dancing cupid had forgotten the drama of the night before. Now, he was capering in the morning sunshine, reckless, devil-may-care, impudent as ever, exulting in wanton glee over the uncounted centuries of rapture and of sorrow he had brought upon the human race.

A bumble-bee, descendant perhaps of the intruder in the old hall a year ago, came reeling by in sonorous intoxication. And it was natural that the pale roses of Anne Boleyn, looking down from the castle wall, should quicken with a warmer color when Ethan looked up with a grateful smile and raised his cap. Octavia tossed them a kiss.

"Also my blessing," said Ethan, "upon Lucy Lake."

Octavia closed her eyes, and with upturned face drew a long, slow breath and murmured, "What a perfect day!" And as she spoke Ethan drew her toward him, approaching his face to hers, intent upon that quaint performance so unavoidable, apparently, with persons in their relation. But Octavia, from a willing co-operator with smiling face

and yielding body suddenly became a dissenter, stiffened, frowned, and drew back. "No, never again! I am forgetting something."

"Forgetting what?"

"Forgetting that I had decided we can never marry."

Ethan's eyebrows went up. "Really?"

"Yes, really."

"What have I done?"

"You have deceived me: a deliberate, long continued deception. And if you did it once you would do it again. All through life, perhaps."

"Oh, what a thought! But tell me, lovely person, in what way have I deceived you?"

"In not telling me of your wealth. In passing yourself off as a poor draughtsman working for a living."

"But if I had announced myself as a Yankee millionaire you would have shrieked and run away."

"So, then, it was a cold blooded scheme, calmly carried out?"

"Yes. And how well I did it!"

"To your everlasting shame! Is your mother so very rich?"

"Yes."

"Even for America?"

"Even for America."

"Horrid!" said Octavia, with a gesture of despair. "Just horrid! All the romance is gone. I am making no sacrifice. I give nothing."

"Nothing! Gods of Olympus! You give yourself, and that's a million times more than I or any other man deserves!"

But she shook her head. "No, it's horrid—a dreadful disappointment."

He took one of her hands in both of his. "A newly married couple starting out in life must expect some disappointments. And there are even harder blows than unexpected wealth."

She withdrew her hand and backed away a step. "Then your ignorance about the plans was all a lie."

"No. On my honor I knew nothing about it. Mumsey was very sly. She evidently meant to surprise me."

But Octavia turned away, walked to the Kosyie Benche, and sat down. He followed, and sat beside her. As the Kosyie Benche was barely wide enough for two, no space was wasted. She folded her hands and leaned back with an air of weariness and resignation. "Being Americans, I suppose you acquired this wealth dishonestly."

"On the contrary, my father was cheated into it."

"Cheated into it! I have heard of people being cheated *out* of a fortune, but never *into* one."

"Well, 'tis a wondrous tale, and if you care to listen I will tell it."

"Go on."

"In the first place," said Ethan, "to begin at the

beginning, when you try to be cross you are even more delectable than when you—"

"Go on with your story."

He began. "My father, recently married, had started out for himself as an architect. Being young and unknown, clients were scarce. He had one draughtsman, but not enough work to keep him busy. So he dismissed the draughtsman. This condition lasted about a year, until he and Mumsey moved to a cheaper boarding house."

"Oh, your poor mother! What a come down!"

"Yes. It was certainly a change from Drumworth Castle. I knew Mumsey came from England, but she never talked about it. And the questions I asked when a little boy were answered in such a way that I knew there was a secret she wished to keep to herself. But as nothing she could do or had done could lessen my respect and affection, I never bothered her about it.

Well, to continue. My father had about decided to take in his sign and look for a position as draughtsman when Fortune one morning walked right into his office without knocking. She was disguised as a real estate man, short and stout. She wore a diamond ring and a chin beard and was smoking a strong cigar, which she kept in her mouth as she talked. This man was "booming" a new town in Colorado and wanted designs for a wooden hotel, and a wooden opera house. Father made the drawings. And when the work was

done he sent his bill for the price agreed on, fifteen hundred dollars."

"How much is that in civilized money?"

"I couldn't say. But in the coin of this island—to which I am indebted for something dearer than life—it would be three hundred pounds. Instead of sending the money the man wrote that things had gone against him and he could not pay all his creditors. But he would deed to my father a farm in payment of his bill. This farm, he wrote, was of forty acres and easily worth one hundred dollars an acre. As it was clear from the letter that if father refused the farm he would probably get nothing, he sent a receipt in full for the fifteen hundred dollars and received a deed of the land."

"So he got four thousand dollars instead of fifteen hundred."

"Well, it had that appearance—for a few months. But when he tried to sell this four thousand dollar farm at auction he couldn't get a bid on it. Nobody wanted it. He learned that this farm was no farm at all; merely a treeless, waterless, grassless tract on the side of a barren mountain. Then he realized how completely he had been fooled."

"Outrageous! I do hope the horrid brute was punished."

"He was. Plentifully and most elaborately punished. Retribution was camping on his trail. But that did not help my father at the time. The failure to get his fifteen hundred dollars forced him to give

up his office and seek a position as draughtsman. Then he and Mumsey took smaller rooms in a still cheaper boarding-house."

"And your poor mother! How hard for her!"

"Yes, it was hard on Mumsey; and I, always tactless, chose that period of failure and starvation to come into the world."

Octavia smiled. "No, never tactless. But go on."

"Well, to make a long story short, my father sold, within two years, a half interest in two of those forty acres for more than a million dollars. The worthless farm was lined with silver."

"Really? Was it a mine?—a truly silver mine?"

"A' really, truly mine. And not only one but several mines. And so, all the rest of his days he was odiously, shockingly rich."

"Splendid!" exclaimed Octavia. "And there was no more poverty for your mother."

"I should say not! Mumsey moved from the back rooms of a boarding-house to a corner mansion; from street cars to victorias; from worn-out dresses to the newest Paris creations. In short, from darkness to light, from the bottom of the ladder to the very top."

"And cheated into it! Oh, it was lovely!"

"Yes, just lovely!"

Octavia leaned back and closed her eyes. "What a fairy tale! And to end so well! But there is a bad side to it, I suppose, as you, instead of the ambitious hardworking man I imagined, were brought up like other gilded youths."

"Not a bit! Father loved his work and stuck to architecture. And he brought me up in the same way. Ask Mumsey if I am a loafer."

"Ask *her,* indeed! A mother's opinion of an only child!"

Baseborn, at this point, suddenly conscious of being too long ignored, rushed to Octavia, barked, bounced, then rose up and placed his front paws against her knees. Gently she pushed him away, then dusted off the dirt. "Excuse me, Baseborn, but this is a clean dress. Forgive me, won't you?"

Ethan glowered upon the dog. "Shame on you, Baseborn! Never forget that you and I have married into the most exalted family of this island. It is for us to make up in deportment what we lack in beauty."

"Lack in beauty!" exclaimed Octavia. "You are the two handsomest things in England!"

Ethan looked down into Baseborn's honest face—honest, but of surpassing ugliness—and he whistled softly. "That, of course, cannot be denied. However, if good intentions count at a beauty contest we are in it."

On this subject was further discourse, friendly and informal as befitted a Kosyie Benche in sunshine, with the perfume of flowers and old box. During the discourse Ethan took her nearest hand and seemed to be counting the fingers. She, in an idle way, was watching Baseborn, as he dug for treasure, a few feet away. And he was displaying the enthusiasm customary with dogs in similar en-

terprises. She happened to notice, indifferently at first, that something near his nose caused Baseborn to stop work for a moment, take a step forward and investigate. This thing, a small, whitish grey object, failed to sustain his interest, and he returned to his labors. But it interested Octavia. She withdrew the hand whose fingers were being counted, arose, walked over and picked up the object. She accomplished the deed in such a way that the man on the bench could not see what she was doing. She studied the article—a silver coin—brushed off the dirt, then, with it hidden in her hand, faced about. Instead of returning to her place on the Kosyie Benche she walked away, suggesting they enter the Old Hall. And Ethan followed.

As they stood in the embrasure of the great window—the window of pleasant memories—she told Ethan to keep his eyes, for a moment, on the distant landscape. He obeyed. What she did behind him, off near Pandora's box, was not then divulged. When permitted to look around he saw nothing unusual. His eyes came back to hers for information. She smiled, and had begun to speak, when the smile departed. Terror took its place and she looked toward the door.

"Horrors! Listen!"

He listened. Distinctly to their ears, from the cloistered arches, came voices of approaching tourists. Octavia frowned in vexation, and pressed her hand against a cheek.

"Oh dear! I forgot it was their day."

Now Ethan cared little for the visitors, but he sympathized with Octavia. After a glance in the direction of the coming voices he did an unaccountable thing—a thing never explained. Yielding to a sudden impulse he started toward the gallery at the end of the Hall. Octavia and Baseborn followed close behind. He knew nothing of the secret door. He had never heard it mentioned, nor dreamed of its existence. Yet, with no hesitation, without the slightest wavering or uncertainty, he walked directly to it, to the fourth panel from the left. And there were many panels in the partition, all precisely alike. He was conscious, once again, of a sensation more or less familiar to everybody, the sudden, evanescent but vivid impression of passing through an experience already known to us. This sensation had surprised him more than once while at Drumworth Castle. Especially had he known it those mornings in the Old Hall when working at his drawings, with Octavia at the window—also on the Kosyie Benche. This time, however, it was stronger and yet more vivid; even stronger and more vivid than the night before, when the moonlit face of the Earl of Drumworth stared back at him, with glazing eyes, from the pedestal of the dancing cupid. Now, guided by this flash of a mysterious knowledge—a sudden sense of things unknown—he walked straight to the secret door, a door, as such, invisible to all who knew it not. And he pressed his thumb

upon the hidden spring. This spring, a bit of metal no larger than a finger tip, was so well concealed between the moldings of the panel that even persons familiar with it had to pause and search. Moreover, he did it rapidly and with precision, as if it were a habit. And he failed to realize the singularity of his act until a moment later, when he, Octavia and Baseborn were sitting on a lower step of the narrow stair, huddled close together in the dark. All three were listening to the voices of the tourists as they entered the Hall.

Octavia whispered, "Who told you of the secret panel?"

"Nobody. I didn't know there was one."

In solemn undertones they discussed the marvel. Answering Octavia's questions, Ethan explained that he walked to the secret door with eyes open and wits about him, and pressed the hidden spring instinctively, feeling no surprise until the thing was done and the door had closed behind them. Now that he knew the story of his parents, he could better understand, or at least divine a cause for those sudden flashes of familiarity that had often come to him in the Old Hall, in the deserted garden and on the Kosyie Benche. A year ago, before he knew their story, these sensations puzzled him. He rarely had such experiences before coming to Drumworth Castle. The explanation that seemed to them the least improbable was that some lasting impression on a parent's brain—of one or both—might have

descended to the son; that in this emergency, although unimportant, he had obeyed an impulse of his subconscious mind. And what more probable than that Ethan's mother, on sudden warning of a husband's visit, had fled in terror to this door? And for the wife who knew that husband the terror would never be forgotten. Octavia could testify from her own experience that the Countess of Drumworth knew well the panel and its secret spring.

This whispering in the darkness lasted until the voices of Bayliss and his followers died away.

Again there was silence in the Old Hall.

XXXIII

ABOVE THE CLOUDS

BASEBORN, for one, was glad to get out. He had been restive during the dark imprisonment. And when, at last, he and his two friends stepped forth into the light he was dissuaded with difficulty from pursuing the intruders and voicing his opinion.

All aglow with sunshine was the Old Hall; and Ethan, with Octavia, stood for a moment blinking at the light. As they neared the great window, where the thousand perfumes from the old garden floated in through the open casement, a bird alighted on the sill, at the lady's usual seat. He was small, and grey in color, with a white breast and a touch of pink at the throat. At once he began to sing. Sweet were his notes, and musical his song. But, if one could judge from the singer's manner, the song was a protest. He made it clear that he regarded these two persons with suspicion. So frank and so emphatic was his disapproval that it excited comment.

"What an interesting little chap!" said Ethan. "I am afraid we don't have him in my country. What is he, anyway?"

"A chaffinch. He knows you are a Yankee and is telling you to go home."

Ethan laughed. "There's no doubt about that—ill mannered little Britisher!"

For a moment they stood watching him and listening to what he had to say. He said it in a cheery voice, in an off hand, jolly way, and it was more like a laugh than a song. But he studied this man and woman first with one eye then the other, and seemed to sing because he couldn't help it. He gave the impression of one appointed by himself—and possibly other birds in the garden—to order trespassers away.

"An officious, impudent little snob!" said Ethan, "but how merry and optimistic. Why don't we have him in America?"

"America!" Octavia repeated the word with ostentatious contempt. "He is far too wise! But tell me, speaking of birds, are American husbands expensive?"

"Expensive? You mean, are they extravagant?"

"No. I mean, are they expensive."

"To purchase?"

"Yes, to purchase."

"American husbands are dearer than American wives. You can buy an American heiress with any old title."

"But if one wished to buy an American husband of fairly good quality what would be the price?"

Ethan closed his eyes in solemn thought. "Much

depends on the purchaser. If a repulsive old woman wanted to buy a nice young man the price might be a million dollars."

"And what would be *your* price?"

"To a repulsive old woman?"

"No, to me."

"Five or ten cents."

"How much is ten cents?"

"About five pence."

"Then I surely could buy you for sixpence."

"Oh, any time!"

"Go to Pandora's box, and keep what you find there."

Ethan frowned and shook his head. He spoke of that maiden's heartless joke a year ago, and the tragedy it nearly caused. "The mission of Pandora's box, you know, is to bring trouble to mortals."

"Some troubles," said Octavia, "are blessings in disguise."

Ethan walked over to the statue, put his hand in the marble casket and drew forth a coin. He studied it, then looked up in surprise.

"Well, did you ever! It's the shilling you gave me for rowing you across the river the first time I ever saw you! There's the dent I made near the edge. Is this what you picked up in the garden a little while ago?"

She nodded. "And once again I give it; sixpence, the price I pay for you: and the rest, as before, a tip."

"I accept the tip with thanks, but you must take back the other sixpence. I was yours already. Besides, you may find it a useful talisman. If I ever become too independent just show me this shilling. It will remind me that I was bought for sixpence."

"But I have always heard that American husbands are never too independent; that they are humble minded and obedient."

"Always. There are no exceptions."

"And obey their wives in all things?"

"In all things."

"Shall you do everything I tell you?"

"Yes, oh, Joy of the Present, Hope of the Future!"

"Always and forever?"

"So long as I live."

"Do all my errands?"

"Certainly."

"Never contradict?"

"Never."

Octavia drew back a little, and regarded him from the corners of her eyes. "Will you think as I do—in all matters?"

"That will be my duty."

"Change your religion?"

"At once."

"Be a gentleman of leisure? Give up your profession?"

"Yes."

"And your mother, too, if I am jealous?"

"Of course!"

"Live here at Drumworth all the year round?"

"Yes."

"Never go to America, even for a visit?"

"Never."

"Forget your country and become a British subject?"

"Yes."

"Do you mean to keep all those promises?"

"No."

Octavia laughed. "Thank heaven! I should despise you if you did!"

The chaffinch at the window was stepping sideways, to and fro, silent now, but suspicious; uncertain apparently how to express his disapproval. For these intruders were impervious to censure. In their designs he had no confidence.

Baseborn with his nose to the floor was sniffing about the room in the tracks of the departed tourists, uttering low growls. But these growls were partly for show. They were merely the usual canine expressions of doubt as to the intentions of strangers. And who had a better right to responsibility for the safety of Octavia than the present dog?

The two lovers stood smiling into each other's faces, like happy children. Through the stained glass of the great window the sunlight lay gently upon them, as in friendly approval.

"This morning in the garden," said Ethan, "you were shocked at hearing of Mumsey's descent from Drumworth castle to a cheap American boarding-

house. Yet you must have been prepared, until last night, for a similar experience. Or, at best, to struggle along in a modest wooden cottage."

"Yes; painted white, with green shutters."

"And that we should live on whatever income I might earn from my profession?"

"Yes, little Ethan."

"And to pass the rest of your days among the far-away Yankees, whom you despised?"

Octavia's cheeks grew a trifle redder. "Oh, why do you recall it?"

"Please tell me honestly. It is true, isn't it?"

"Yes—I am ashamed to confess it."

"The confession is to your everlasting glory. And you were ready to leave your old friends, your social life and all that binds you to England, and to follow me—anywhere?"

"Anywhere." And with this word there was a little outward gesture of the hands, signifying many things.

"You were going to do all this for love of me—just Ethan Lovejoy?"

"Life for me did not begin until you, just Ethan Lovejoy, came into it."

Ethan closed his eyes, straightened up and drew a long breath. When his eyes opened there was a blinking—that familiar but ever useless effort to conceal a moisture between the lids.

"Well, I can only say"—his unsteady voice told of a deeper feeling than words disclosed—"it is

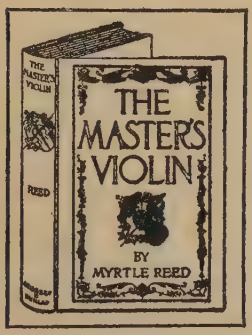
for me to make you happy, Octavia, and—my love for you—if ever—"

A final quaver ended his speech. His tongue failed. This little breakdown called for no reply, and no reply was spoken. But in Octavia's face there was an answer—in her eyes, in the warmer color that came into her cheeks, and on the lips that murmured something—something nobody heard. However, to make the answer clearer still, she stepped forward into his arms.

As they closed around her, the chaffinch at the window began to sing, and rose upon his wings. He sailed away over the old garden, proclaiming to the world, in a melody of mirth, that all was going well.

The Master's Violin

By MYRTLE REED



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